

SMITH'S

APRIL
1917

MAGAZINE

15
CENTS

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Vol. XXV

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 1

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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 Act of Congress, March 3, 1879, by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE. Canadian subscription, \$2.16. Foreign, \$2.52.

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SENATOR MASON NOW SAYS

Nuxated Iron should be made known to every nervous, run down, anaemic man, woman and child.

Opinion of Doctor Howard James, late of United States Public Health Service who has prescribed and thoroughly tested Nuxated Iron in his own private practice.

WHAT SENATOR MASON SAYS:

"I have often said I would never recommend medicine of any kind. I believe that the doctor's place. However, after the hardest political campaign of my life, without a chance for a vacation, I had been starting to court every morning with that horrible tired feeling one cannot describe. I was advised to try Nuxated Iron. As a pioneer in the pure food and drug legislation, I was at first loath to try an advertised remedy, but after advising with one of my medical friends, I gave it a test. The results have been so beneficial in my own case I made up my mind to let my friends know about it, and you are at liberty to publish this statement if you so desire. I am now sixty-five years of age, and I feel that a remedy which will build up the strength and increase the power of endurance of a man of my age should be known to every nervous, run-down anaemic man, woman and child."

Senator Mason's statement in regard to Nuxated Iron was shown to several physicians who were requested to give their opinions thereon.

Dr. Howard James, late of the United States Public Health Service, said:

"Senator Mason is to be commended on handing out this statement on Nuxated Iron for public print. There is nothing like organic Iron—Nuxated Iron—to give increased strength, snap, vigor, and staying power. It enriches the blood, brings roses to the cheeks of women and is an unfailing source of renewed vitality, endurance and power for men who burn up too rapidly their nervous energy in the strenuous strain of the great business competition of the day."

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston physician who has studied abroad in great European medical institutions, said: "Senator Mason is right. As I have said a hundred times over, organic Iron is the greatest of all strength builders."

"Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of twenty and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking organic iron. Nuxated Iron had filled him with renewed life. At thirty he was in bad health; at forty-six he was care-worn and nearly all in. Now at fifty, after taking Nuxated Iron, a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth."

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without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jacques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."



Former United States Senator Wm. E. Mason, recently elected Member of the U. S. Congress from Illinois

Senator Mason's championship of Pure Food and Drug Legislation, his fight for the rural free delivery system, and his strong advocacy of all bills favoring labor and the rights of the masses as against trusts and combines, made him a national figure at Washington and endeared him to the hearts of the working man and the great masses of people throughout the United States. Senator Mason has the distinction of being one of the really big men of the nation. His strong endorsement of Nuxated Iron must convince any intelligent thinking reader that it must be a preparation of very great merit and one which the Senator feels is bound to be of great value to the masses of people everywhere, otherwise he could not afford to lend his name to it, especially after his strong advocacy of pure food and drug legislation.

Since Nuxated Iron has obtained such an enormous sale—over three million people using it annually—other iron preparations are recommended as a substitute for it. The reader should remember that there is a vast difference between ordinary metallic iron and the organic iron contained in Nuxated Iron, therefore always insist on having Nuxated Iron as recommended by Dr. Howard James, late of the United States Public Health Service; Dr. Schuyler C. Jacques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York, and other physicians.

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Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 25

APRIL, 1917

Number 1

The Gold Rod

By Dane Coolidge

Author of "Hidden Water," "Rimrock Jones," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

A Desert Drama in Four Parts. Part I.

CHAPTER I.

HIDDEN away like an ant's nest in the shadow of a black volcanic dome, the Oro Fino Mine lay huddled in a cañon, the one life spot for miles. A single battery of stamps, hammering away in the half-deserted mill, made the gulch resound with its thunder; and a busy little car, rising slowly up from the depths, dumped its ore on the grating of the grizzly and slipped quietly back for more. From somewhere underground came the thud of blasts; and the day shift, stringing out of the change room, came slowly down to the store. It was a live mine yet, still turning out its tiny brick of gold, and only the superintendent and a chosen few were supposed to know that the vein was lost.

In the shade of the store porch, the wearied miners, bleached to an unnatural whiteness by sweating in the wet drifts below, sat peacefully smoking their pipes and watching their little world. Across the road on the slope of the hill stood the superintendent's office, with a flight of steps leading

down from it; above it rose the gallows frame of the hoist, where the car bobbed up from the shaft; and below the hoist, extending terrace by terrace down the hillside, lay the mill, the cyanide tanks, and the river of sluiced-out tailings.

To the trained ears of the miners, the ocean of sound that dinned through the narrow cañon was separated into many parts—the crashing thunder of the stamps, the sudden panting of the engine as the signal came to hoist, the spill of the ore as it rattled down the gratings, and the steady *rhump, rhump, rhump* of the rock crusher as it crunched the quartz up small and dropped it on the silent conveyers. It was their world—all that they knew—but it was doomed soon to be stilled.

A covered wagon, drawn by two stout mules, came toiling up the road, followed by a bony bobtailed hound, and as it swung in to the store, the miners eyed it in clannish silence. Their lives were dull and any chance arrival was a welcome visitation, but for any one not of their kind they had no word of greeting. Even though he



"Where's the superintendent of this mine?" he demanded.

bore his bed on his back and was sure to strike them for a dollar, a miner was hailed as a brother, but this stranger was obviously no "hard rock." He was a tall old man, tanned a mahogany brown, with heavy white hair chopped off square at his shoulders like an Indian; and from underneath beetling eyebrows that were black and arrogant he looked over and past them as if seeking some one in authority.

"Where's the superintendent of this mine?" he demanded, as his eyes returned to the benches.

The miners stirred, but said nothing. Then a brawny Irishman, whose necktie denoted a certain claim to caste, stepped forth and spoke.

"He's busy just now, sir," he began, "consulting with an expert—a mining engineer, sir. I'm the foreman—Dillon's the name—if there's anything I can do, sir."

"Leander Penhallow is my name," returned the stranger distantly. "Have you got enough ore in your mine?"

A nudge went down the bench of miners, and Dillon pursed his lips judiciously.

"Well, we have and we have not, sir," he replied. "Did you come, perhaps, to show us the lead?"

"That was my errand," answered Penhallow, a sudden gleam coming into his eyes. "You, sir, are a miner, and as such you probably understand ores; but at best you can see no farther than

the next man and one pick blow may prove you mistaken. But I, sir, am a scientist. I have spent years of my life in research and experimentation, and as a result I hold here in my hand an instrument that will locate your lost vein."

He drew from his breast a buckskin case, ornately decorated with beads, but as he began to unwrap his indicator, a rumble of intolerance greeted him. Even Dillon's blue eyes, which until now had expressed an almost exaggerated deference, began to shift and twinkle with amusement.

"You're a little bit late, my friend," he said. "There's a college professor on the job, with an instrument as big as two of that. But if you'd ask my opinion—which nobody does—I'd as soon have you, sir, as him."

"This instrument," continued Penhallow, gravely disregarding the laugh, "is unique in the mining world. It is not a witch rod, neither is it one of those patent gold finders that are advertised to trap the unwary. It is a specialized instrument whose deviations not only indicate the presence of gold, but——"

He paused, as all eyes shifted suddenly to the slope of the opposite hill, and then slapped his instrument back into its case.

"Very well," he rapped out, as he perceived a bulldog rushing down to the road, "since you take more interest in a dog fight, I will not cast my pearls before swine. But let me warn you to keep that dog away or he may come to some serious injury."

The bulldog, joined on the way by two smaller animals, made directly for the wagon, beneath which Penhallow's hound was cowering, every hair on end. He was a powerful creature—blue-gray with large black spots and one eye china white—and as the village dogs bore down upon him, he coughed

fiercely in his throat and silently peeled his teeth.

"Bravo, Turco!" cried the gold-rod man encouragingly. Then, turning to Dillon, he said in a voice that was tremulous with anger: "May I ask you, sir, to drive that dog away? He undoubtedly is seeking a fight."

"It's too late now, sir," answered Dillon, grinning. "Old Bull will have his way, and it's dangerous in the extreme to interfere with him. Besides, he's the boss' dog, you know. Is your own, now, much of a fighter?"

The bulldog approached the bristling Turco, who was backed up against the wheel, and thrust out his nose to smell of him. Instantly the savage hound changed ends and, chopping his long jaws together like a wolf, snarled defiance in the intruder's face. The bulldog flinched; then, after the manner of his breed, he crouched silently and plunged at the other's throat. But once more the hound leaped and snapped, and this time his jaws struck blood. The bulldog bored in on him, trying desperately to gain a hold, and three times in three seconds the fierce hound fanged him deep. Then, as the other dogs rushed in upon him, he struck them right and left and grappled again with his enemy.

The air was rent with yelping and snarling, the shrill outcries of the wounded curs and the hoarse coughings of the combatants. As the miners, seeing the battle going against their dog, tried half-heartedly to separate the combatants, a girl's head popped out of the covered wagon and was as quickly pushed back by Penhallow. Then a tall, bareheaded young man, with his sleeves rolled up, came galloping down the steps and the men made way for him instantly.

"Give me some water!" he cried, and without breaking his stride, he rushed past them and into the store.

The dogs were in a clinch, with Bull

underneath, when he reappeared with a bucket of water and dashed it over them indiscriminately. They flinched and let go, and as the hound backed off dripping, the young man whisked Bull away.

"Aha!" applauded Dillon, with a roguish intonation. "Leave it to Lewis, the college boy. Shoveling muck or stopping a dog fight, he's *there!*"

Lewis, the college boy, brushed back his wavy pompadour and held on tenaciously to the bulldog, but as the miners sought for rocks to drive back the hound, Penhallow descended swiftly to the ground and stopped them with a look.

"So, Turco," he soothed, as the hound slunk behind him. "Bravo, sir! You made a good fight."

The crowd parted as another man came down the steps—a heavy-set man, his face red with rage, his eyes hidden behind colored glasses. It was Wadsworth, the superintendent, who had been watching the fight from above and had seen the valiant Bull meet his Waterloo.

"Whose dog is that?" he demanded, pointing to the meeching Turco; and Penhallow, the gold-rod man, folded his arms and answered him boldly.

"Mine, sir," he said. "And since your men have forced it to the issue, I do not hesitate to say he is the equal of any on earth."

"Well, take him away from here," stormed the superintendent, "and keep him away! You have no business to be traveling with such a dangerous animal."

"And who may you be, sir?" inquired Penhallow, after a moment's scrutiny. "If I am not mistaken, you are the very man I have come to see."

"I am the superintendent of this mine," answered Wadsworth shortly.

"My name is Leander Penhallow," returned the gold-rod man, showing his

strong white teeth in a smile, "and I have come here to demonstrate my instrument for the locating of lost bodies of ore."

A change came over the flushed face of Wadsworth. He turned pale and regarded the other intently; then laughed and jerked his head.

"Don't want to see it," he said. "All foolishness. Worst kind of a fake."

"Perhaps," suggested Penhallow significantly, as he drew the embellished case from his breast. "All I ask is that you give me a trial—submit me and my instrument to the most rigid test you can devise—and if I fail in any particular, it will not cost you a cent."

The superintendent glanced about at his men, their rugged faces set hard in disbelief, and gave way to a cynical smile.

"And if you find it?" he suggested. "I shall expect a half of my find," answered Penhallow firmly.

Wadsworth cast a single contemptuous glance at him and turned to attend to his dog. The crowd of miners, taking their cue from the boss, chortled hoarsely and backed away, but the tall youth with the pompadour remained. He was interested, and Dillon, the foreman, was quick to take advantage.

"How'd the professor do, sir?" he began with his palavering smile. "Mr. Sales, here, assistant engineer for John Quesnor Bratnamber, the eminent geologist and mining expert. Perhaps, now, you could demonstrate to him, since he's the man that's got your job."

The old man folded his arms and gazed at Lewis Sales from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, and his lips relaxed in a faint smile.

"Geologist or miner," he said, "or mining engineer—I make exception to none. I have here a proposition that will stand the closest scrutiny, and I perceive that I am addressing a gentleman. Mr. Sales, I am pleased to

make your acquaintance, sir. May I ask you to take this silver dollar and this twenty-dollar gold piece and hide them in the dust of the road? Then I will ask my little granddaughter to step out and demonstrate my instruments."

He passed the coins over carelessly and threw open the canvas of the prairie schooner. There was a stir within, a moment of parley, and Athene Penhallow stepped out.

CHAPTER II.

The "little granddaughter" of Leander Penhallow appeared remarkably like a grown woman—except for the look in her eyes. She was of woman's height, and two heavy strands of ashen-gold hair, parted from behind like an Indian's and hanging down in front, lent maturity to her face; but her scanty skirt, her buckskin leggings, and the unconscious directness of her gaze, marked her still for the half-awakened child. Yet her grace, as she glided down the crude steps, spoke subtly of the woman-to-be.

She thrust back her hair and stood facing the crowd, and as the hound stepped up and nudged her hand, she stooped and looked at his wounds. Then, finding him almost unhurt from the fierce affray, she raised her head and smiled. The murmur of surprise that had greeted her appearance changed to approval of her beauty, and as she scanned the men's faces again, she encountered the smiling glance of Sales. If youth responds to youth, then some thought was flashed between them, for she blushed and he looked away; but he came forward laughing, the coins in either hand, and cleared a space for the trial.

"Stand back, now," he said, as he pushed back the miners, "and all turn your heads the other way. If everybody knew where the money was hid, I'll bet I could find it myself."

He hurried about, persuading the men to turn away; and then, with a sudden flip, he shot the two coins edgewise into the powdery dust and called upon the gold-rod man to demonstrate.

"Very well," responded Penhallow, who had been blindfolded by his granddaughter.

Tearing off the bandage, he produced three wands from his case. One was a forked willow switch, still fresh and green; the second was a wishbone-shaped prong of wire, wrapped from fork to tips in buckskin; and the third was exactly similar, except that the "charm" at the end was incased in yellow silk.

"This, gentlemen," announced Penhallow, as he held up the fork of willow, "is the ordinary witch rod of the water feelers. For centuries—yes, for thousands of years—our ancestors in England and Wales have used it for locating wells. I, unfortunately, am not blessed with the gift to work it, though some of you probably are. This rod will dip for running water, for magnetic iron, and for gold and silver.

"But here, gentlemen," he went on, holding the two metal rods in the air, "are the products of science, unaffected by superstition. For twenty years, by patient experiment and at a cost of thousands of dollars, I have labored day and night to produce these simple instruments. This"—he held out the plain buckskin rod—"will dip for silver, and for silver alone. This"—and as he held up the silk-incased rod, his voice was rapt like a prophet's—"will work for nothing but gold."

He paused and looked about him, and the superstitious miners were stilled. Despite their loud scoffing, they had all seen witch rods work, and many had seen them dip to some spot where treasure was hid. It was a matter of common report underground, where, amid snapping of straining timbers and the breathing of unearthly

winds, Mother Nature seemed to whisper in their ears. But aboveground, in the glare of the sun and in the presence of educated men—then it was all poppycock, moonshine, tommy-knocker talk!

But they held their breaths as the old man singled out the willow wand and the girl took the switch ends in her hands. With her thumbs over the ends and the fork thrust out before her, she stepped out confidently across the dusty space, while Penhallow looked tolerantly on. At a spot in the dust, the fork suddenly dipped, and rose up again as she passed on. She came back and stood above it, tightly gripping at the sticks, and in rhythmic jerks the end dipped down, first to one spot, then to another.

"There they are," she said, but her grandfather waved back the fascinated crowd.

"Not so fast, not so fast," he cried. "Any ignorant water witch could do that. But here, now, is the test. One of these coins is silver, the other is of gold. Neither you nor I know which, but with my instruments, I can surely tell."

He passed the silver rod to Athene, who held it passively over the first spot. But when, with quickening steps, she moved over to the second cache, the wire dipped as at the pull of a fish and the charm pointed straight at the spot.

"Dig there," announced Penhallow to the astounded college boy, "and you will find the silver dollar."

Sales scooped up the dust and from its midst out dropped the dollar.

"Telepathy," he muttered. "There's a fake here somewhere."

But the gold-rod man only chuckled.

"Now," he said, "to carry the test still further, kindly place these silver dollars near the gold." He drew from his pocket three more silver coins and returned the silver rod to its case.

"Bury them any way you wish about this spot, where, you will admit, the gold piece lies. Cover them over with dust while Athene turns her head, and she will pick out the gold from their midst. Is it fair? Very well. When that is demonstrated, I shall expect you to admit that my instrument will locate gold."

He submitted to the blindfold, and, while Dillon winked mischievously, Lewis Sales pondered seriously on his problem. It was no time for joking or sequestering intrusted money; the logical thing to do was in some way to detect the fraud. That there was a fraud stood to reason; otherwise this half-crazed gold-rod man would be richer than he seemed. Sales changed the coins, his hands deep in the dust heap; changed them again and then hit upon a scheme. Very deftly, while no one was looking, he secreted the gold piece in his hand and slipped it swiftly into his pocket. Then he smoothed over the powdery dust and beckoned the girl to go ahead.

She took the gold rod with a shrug of childish reluctance, and Lewis accompanied her to detect the trick. He watched her closely as she held it over the spot, but to his surprise she did not make it dip. She, too, seemed surprised at the rod's failure to respond and gripped it harder, turning her elbows out. It dipped, then, though uncertainly, and as she held it over the place, Sales reached out quickly and plucked back her sleeve.

"You're pinching it!" he accused, as he saw the straining muscles, but his triumph was cut short by a rush of the savage hound.

"Down, Turco!" cried the girl in a fright, and as Sales backed away, the dog stood before her, growling.

"Be careful, sir," warned Penhallow, stepping quickly in and driving the dog away. "He will bite you if you touch the child. Now, take the



She thrust back her hair and stood facing the crowd, and as the hound stepped up and nudged her hand, she stooped and looked at his wounds.

rod again, Athene, and look for the gold piece. I'm sure it is somewhere hereabouts."

"It won't dip!" complained the girl, now vaguely defiant. "I tried it, but the rod won't work."

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed Penhallow, placing the divining rod in her hands. "Say no more, but do as you are bid."

She glanced at him sullenly; then gripped the two handles and paced

back across the trampled dust. At the place where the gold piece had been hidden before, she automatically halted, and once more the silk-incased charm trembled toward the earth.

"It's here!" she declared and, handing over the rod, she hurried back to the wagon.

"Very well," responded Penhallow, with a self-satisfied smile. "If you will dig at that place, my friend, you will find the piece of gold."

Sales brushed back his pompadour and winked at Dillon, as he knelt down to feel in the dust.

"No," he said. "The money isn't there."

"Then where is it?" demanded Penhallow with sudden arrogance.

"That is for you to show," answered Sales, while the crowd of miners laughed, "I hid it somewhere else."

The gold-rod man stooped down and raked hurriedly through the dirt. Then he turned and beckoned sternly to his granddaughter.

"Take this instrument," he directed, handing over the silver rod, "and find every one of those dollars."

She took it trembling and, swinging it about above the dust, located the dollars with absolute certitude.

"Very good," he said, as she gave him the last of them. "But wait—now find that twenty-dollar gold piece."

She met his eyes, then consented unwillingly and paced slowly over the ground. As her search became anxious, the crowd gathered closer and Sales walked watchfully beside her. He was sorry now that he had hidden the money, for Penhallow was looking her through and through, but at least he had exposed the fraud. Over the very spot where she had found the gold before she had paused and dipped the rod again. He had watched her closely, and it had been very evident that she had done it by gripping the handles. Holding the handles backward, thumbs out and palms turned up, she had, by a steady twisting of the wires, turned the pronged point down. And now, when she was at a loss where to locate the money, the gold rod would not work at all. It was not even mental suggestion; it was a physical bending of the wands. But the exposure had gone far enough. With a man like Penhallow, there was evidently a limit beyond which it was dangerous

to pass, and Sales reached into his pocket for the gold piece.

"Well, I guess she can't find it," he suggested, as Penhallow strode in upon them. But the gold-rod man had his granddaughter by the arms.

"Now, no foolishness, lass!" he threatened roughly. "You have humiliated me like this before."

Lewis drew out the coin and was about to drop it on the ground where the poor girl could pick it up when the rod began to work in her hands. It writhed and twisted and leaned over toward him like a living, sentient thing; and as she followed eagerly after it, the rod pointed to the back of his hand!

"Ah, I see!" grunted Penhallow, with a grim gleam of triumph. "You are holding the coin in your hand."

"Yes, I am," admitted Lewis. "But I had it in my pocket when you told me it was buried in that dust."

"Your test was unfair, sir," answered Penhallow with asperity. "I told you to bury it in the dirt."

"Well, she found it," conceded Lewis, handing over the money. "I'm sorry to have made you so much trouble."

"Trouble, sir!" repeated the gold-rod man. "That isn't the question. You were testing the potency of my indicator. My little granddaughter was nervous—she has an aversion to the gold rod—but didn't she find the coin? If it had been in the ground, as she was led to believe, she would have discovered it without any difficulty. But now tell me, sir, as a mining engineer, what objection can you raise to my indicator? Doesn't it stand to reason that, with an instrument like that, I can locate the lost vein in this mine? I have come a long way—from the Hopi villages where I have dwelt with the Indians for two years—to demonstrate my gold rod at this mine. All I

ask is the opportunity—and the half of all I find."

A laugh went up from among the miners at the renewal of this extravagant claim, but Penhallow let it pass with a shrug.

"I take no thought for the laughter of the rabble," he observed with biting scorn. "I am a thinker, myself, not a bundle of reflexes, an automaton to shovel out earth. I apply my intellect to every subject without thought for the beliefs of the masses. If we accept their opinions, we sink to their level and become dead, unreasoning clods. But you, my friend, have had a technical training; you have been taught, I take it, to think. Now what is your opinion, as man to man, of the value of this instrument?"

He drew the gold rod from its beaded case and held it reverently in his hands, and Sales lost his well-bred calm. It was far from his desire to become involved in a controversy with this apparently unbalanced man, and yet obviously there was no easy escape. He cleared his throat and, while Dillon lingered curiously, began speaking in a tone of great authority.

"Well, frankly," he observed, as the miners retreated scornfully, "I doubt its practical value. There is a difference, you must admit, between locating a gold piece in the dust and discovering an ore body underground. But, granting for the sake of argument that it might be done, what advantage would it be? Carried to its logical conclusion, it would simply demonetize gold. If one man with an instrument like that could go over the surface of the earth and locate all the gold, its value would be reduced to nothing. There is, as we know, a minute quantity of gold in every ton of sea water, and the effect would be the same as if we discovered some process of readily recovering that metal. Or in large bodies of clay where no crushing is required

and yet the values run to, say, twenty-five cents a ton—if some cheap and simple process should be devised for extracting the metal, it would defeat, in a way, its own purpose. It would so cheapen the value of gold that it would lose its purchasing power."

"A thinker!" proclaimed Penhallow, striding forward to clasp his hand. "That is just what I intend to do! I intend to demonetize gold!"

"Well, count me in on it, then," broke in the irrepressible Dillon, as Sales drew back astounded. "You can give me all you want of the stuff. I'll spend it—the dirty muck—me and the boys! Sure now, professor, speak a word for me—you know!"

He nudged Sales with his elbow and went off laughing, but the college boy began to look grave. He had plunged into this affair without sufficient consideration, and now Dillon had left him with a madman. The serious manner in which Penhallow had caught at the idea of absolutely demonetizing gold argued him a dangerous man to jest with, and Sales decided to make his escape.

"Excuse me," he said. "I have an appointment with Mr. Wadsworth. Glad I met you, Mr. Penhallow."

He started off on the instant, but the gold-rod man plucked him back.

"Just a minute!" he said, fixing Sales with his compelling eyes. "I have a favor to ask of you, my friend. It has been a rule of my life to trust implicitly my first impressions of every man, and I like you very much. We are destined, I believe, to know each other better. Will you kindly take this rod in your hands?"

He dropped the twenty-dollar gold piece in the dirt and was adjusting the witch rod in Sales' hands when Athene stepped impulsively forward.

"Don't you touch it!" she cried, and her grandfather turned on her waspishly.

"That will do!" he said, and she retreated precipitately to the wagon.

"Now," continued Penhallow, as the miners came back laughing, "we will see if my intuitions are correct. To one man in several thousand is given the gift to operate the divining rod. Unfortunately for my researches, the gift was denied to me, but this man, I feel sure, has the virtue."

He thrust the willow switch into Sales' reluctant hands, but at that moment Wadsworth reappeared on the stairs.

"No, I've got to go," protested Sales, glancing guiltily up at the superintendent.

The gold-rod man caught him by the arm.

"My friend," he began, "you have declared my instrument a fake. What harm can there be in trying it?"

"Ah, give it to me!" exclaimed Dillon boisterously, and Penhallow passed it over in silence.

"It's a fake!" announced Dillon, as the rod refused to work for him, and a Cornish miner plucked it out of his grasp.

"No good!" he grumbled in a disappointed tone and passed it on to another.

They tried it by turns and Sales, the college boy, lingered, though Penhallow did not seek to detain him. When he had held the rod, he had felt a strange aversion to it, but now his hands itched to try it. Penhallow stood by gravely, shrewdly watching each assay, and at the end, he passed the rod again to Sales.

"Try your luck, my friend," he suggested grimly, and Sales laid hold of it eagerly.

If the rod worked in his hands—well, there might be something in it. He could test it, by himself, on the lost vein! He closed down his hands and gazed fixedly at the rod point, squeezing hard as Athene had done.

The rod moved—but hers had moved the same way when she had thought it was over gold. He relaxed his grip, still gazing at the point, and a shout went up from the crowd. It was dipping down as if drawn by some cord that jerked on it, slowly and rhythmically, and a thrill went up his arms. It was like electricity, like the low intensity of a hand battery, a distinct, magnetic vibration. The point of the rod reached downward toward the coin, and as he gripped convulsively at the handles, the bark twisted from the twigs.

"You have the gift," spoke Penhallow in his ear. "Now try this wonderful gold rod."

He jerked the willow abruptly from Sales' grasp and held out the silk-incased rod, but in that moment the spell was broken. Looking up from the road, Sales saw Wadsworth watching him and cast the rod in the dirt.

"I was only fooling," he said, laughing shortly. "I did it by twisting the handles."

CHAPTER III.

The problem that confronted Wadsworth and the directors of the Oro Fino Mine was not one to be taken lightly or referred to traveling witch-rod men. With a true fissure vein of great width and strength, paralleled on both sides by massive rhyolite dikes, they had suddenly encountered a broken zone where all evidence of the vein body was lost. At first they had drifted on blindly, hoping to pick up the lode again when they had crossed the faulted area. Then, after expending huge sums of money in exploring the country beyond, they had returned to the point of departure and driven cross-cuts right and left. Failing in this last attempt to locate the faulted vein, they had given up in despair and referred the whole problem to Bratnomber, the great mining engineer.

John Q. Bratnomber had the doubtful distinction of being both a mining expert and a university professor. The result was that at the university he was spoken of as a mining expert and among mining men he was referred to as a professor—in both cases to his vast disparagement. Yet while he was denounced upon one side as being too theoretical and on the other as being almost unethical in his acceptance of enormous outside fees, no one denied his uncanny ability to solve just such problems as this. He worked in his own way, it was true, using cheap student labor—such as “Professor” Lewis Sales—in much of his preliminary work; but in the end, after his assistants had studied the formation and made graphic representations of the geology of the country, when he came to the mine and made his decision, he was almost invariably correct.

Lewis Sales had been out of college a year and in the Oro Fino district six months. A large part of that time he had worked underground, shoveling back muck while better men set up their machines and proceeded to drive their round of holes; but now the despised “professor” was on top of the ground again, squinting through a transit and laying out on a map the very direction in which these “hard-rock” men should drive. The “practical” men had all had their try at the Oro Fino, and now it was up to the professors to guess where the lost lode had gone. That the vein was there somewhere was almost certain, since the formation was the same beyond the fault; but whether it had been shifted east or west, laid flat, tipped edgewise, or turned at right angles, was a problem beyond the ken of “practical” men and therefore referred to geologists.

The great Bratnomber was almost due on his hurried trip to the mine, and Lewis Sales was working on his final report. It was Bratnomber's system to

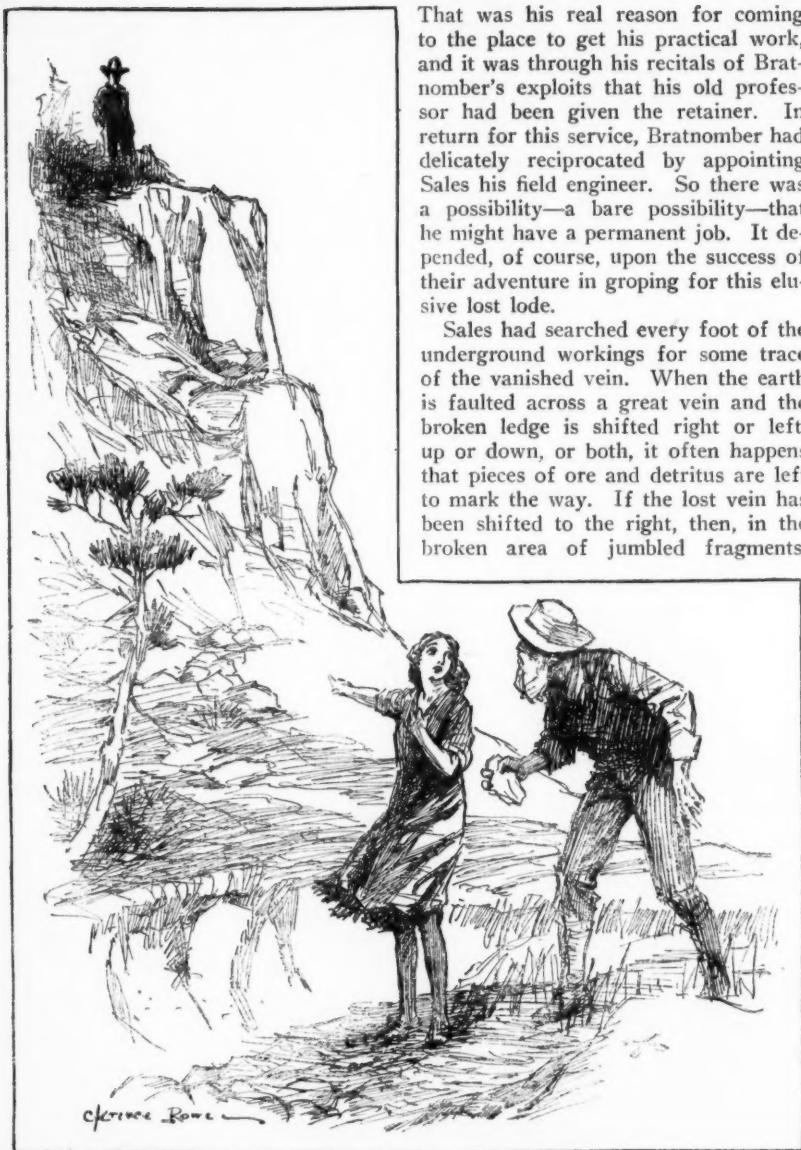
require his assistants to make a careful survey of the ground; after which, as in this case, he expected them further to indicate the exact location of the vein. And when he came, as he would in a few days, to check up every detail of the reconnaissance, it would be Sales' duty to defend his thesis against every attack that could be made. If his premises were all correct, and his conclusions all well taken, then John Q. Bratnomber would drive his stake beside the preliminary stake of his assistant and congratulate him upon his penetration; but if any premise was wrong, any factor overlooked, or the conclusions not justified by the facts, then the whole survey would be made over—and Bratnomber would dispense with his services. After that the company would sink a shaft at the spot that Bratnomber pointed out; and as that would cost about thirty dollars a foot, it was important, of course, to be right.

The mere accident of a dog fight had diverted Lewis Sales from the problem that he lived with day and night. The spectacle of the witch-rod man, with his mysterious instruments and his dreams of demonetizing gold, had fascinated him for the moment; but back in the office, with all his maps before him, his field notes, and the rough draft of his report, he forgot the white-haired stranger and his shy, Indianlike granddaughter and took up the baffling question of the fault. To locate that lost lode, after all his careful surveys, called for higher mathematics and a little luck besides. Lewis needed the luck, for he was rather weak on mathematics, and there was a very special reason why he was anxious to impress Bratnomber. That great geologist did not always travel alone—sometimes he took his wife and his daughter along.

For the six months that he had been at the Oro Fino Mine, Sales had applied his whole mind to the lost vein.

That was his real reason for coming to the place to get his practical work, and it was through his recitals of Bratnombor's exploits that his old professor had been given the retainer. In return for this service, Bratnombor had delicately reciprocated by appointing Sales his field engineer. So there was a possibility—a bare possibility—that he might have a permanent job. It depended, of course, upon the success of their adventure in groping for this elusive lost lode.

Sales had searched every foot of the underground workings for some trace of the vanished vein. When the earth is faulted across a great vein and the broken ledge is shifted right or left, up or down, or both, it often happens that pieces of ore and detritus are left to mark the way. If the lost vein has been shifted to the right, then, in the broken area of jumbled fragments,



"There's a man up there!" she cried, pointing up to the heights where Sales stood out boldly against the sky.

there will be a scattered trailing of ore. Or, if no ore is encountered, then the bendings and groovings that have resulted from the heave of the earth will write on the wall of the fault itself the direction in which the opposing mass has been moved. Sales had studied the fault when, as a mucker and miner, he had worked underground with "the gang," and he knew that the lost vein had moved east.

On the surface of the ground, a great overburden of andesite had buried the formation from sight. Sitting far away on the top of some hill, where the colors of the outcroppings would show, Sales had recreated in his mind the titanic processes by which this had come to pass. In a great rush of waters, the edge of the towering rim rock had been broken down like crumbling dirt and, falling out across the valley, had obscured all trace of the vein. Then, as the wash of waters continued, a channel had been formed—the narrow cañon in which the town was now hid—and the erosion had exposed the buried vein.

This the miners had followed, like ants eating out honey, far under the plastic flow, until at last they had broken into that ancient fault and found themselves cut off from their gold. But on both sides and beyond in unvarying strike rose the enormous combs of the rhyolite dikes and somewhere between them, but across the faulted area, the rich lode of ore led on, and the chance blow of a pick might expose a stringer that would lead at depth to the vein.

Wearied of his papers and the dead reckonings of triangulation, Sales struck out in the morning up the cañon. Once more he went over with the greatest care the line of stakes that marked his surveys and then, climbing uneasily up on the rim rock, he looked out over the country below.

On the level ground the weathered outcrops seemed no more than scattered stones, but, seen from a height, each ledge could be traced in faint lines of white, blue, or green. Sales followed them with his eyes, far into that north country where, in his opinion, the richest ore bodies lay. But when he came back from the land of dreams, he discovered two figures down below him. It was a man and a woman, and he noted with instant jealousy that they were following his morning's trail.

In the mining game, with its big stakes and heavy gambles and continual attempts at fraud, men become in a short time almost ridiculously suspicious, and Sales had the weakness of his craft. He sat where he was as if frozen to the rock and watched them pace to and fro. As they came up the trail that led from the narrow cañon, he recognized Penhallow, the witch-rod man, and his little granddaughter. They were seeking out the Oro Fino vein! First they went across the hills to a great dump-of waste that marked the extension of the Oro Fino workings; then, with her grandfather beside her, the girl turned east and headed toward the base of the rim. At intervals they stopped and circled about curiously, and Sales settled back to watch them.

It had been a great shock to his preconceived opinions when he had felt the witch rod turn in his hands, but he had dismissed the affair from his mind. Although it was strange and almost convincing, he felt sure that there was a trick somewhere. Perhaps the old man, with his snapping black eyes, had laid him under a hypnotic spell or had done some hocus-pocus with the rod. But here, at least, he was natural. He was directing Athene with painstaking care.

As they neared the base of the rim,

Sales could hear the girl when she spoke.

"I'm tired!" she complained in her clear, childish voice, and Penhallow boomed back at her gruffly.

She went on then, and Sales noted with misgiving that they were following almost exactly over the lode. Of course it was a coincidence, but it made him uneasy, and as they came near his stake, he rose. It was at that very spot, after months of careful measuring and tracing out the course of the veins, that he had set his final stake for the shaft that was to be sunk for the lost lode. And was he to allow this impostor, this half-crazed charlatan, to dog his footsteps and claim the credit himself?

Penhallow had stopped, not forty feet west of the stake, and he was pecking an Indian sign on a bowlder when Athene's voice spoke out again.

"There's a man up there!" she cried, pointing up to the heights where Sales stood out boldly against the sky.

The old man whirled and gazed up at him in silence; then threw down his sharp rock and moved away. The girl followed after him, looking back over her shoulder.

The moment they had vanished, Sales started back down the trail. Some fascination, half of curiosity and half of resentment, prompted him to hurry to the spot where they had been, and there, half pecked into the black weathering of a bowlder, was the outline of a cross. He caught up a stone to obliterate the mark, then threw it down in disgust. Who would ever believe this doddering old man when he came forward with his ridiculous claim? Was not Bratnomber under contract to locate the lost lode, and had not Sales, his assistant, staked it first? He kicked the sign in unreasoning resentment and went striding back toward the camp.

CHAPTER IV.

When Leander Penhallow and his covered wagon had moved on up the road from the store, Lewis Sales and the men of the Oro Fino had quite naturally dismissed him from mind. If he had hoped, through his demonstration of the gold rod, to receive an offer to locate the lost lead, all possibility of that had been dashed at the start by Turco's encounter with Wadsworth's bulldog. Whatever his other qualities of irresolution and weakness might be, it could not be said of Wadsworth that he was not loyal to his dog. Bull had met his Waterloo before his master's eyes, and at the fangs of a low-bred cur that looked more like a coyote than a dog. Hence Leander Penhallow had been turned away with contempt, and Sales thought he had seen the last of him.

But there is a type of pioneer mind that is not easily discouraged by rebuffs, and as Sales came down the trail through the cañon, he saw Penhallow's wagon in the sand wash. He had left the main road and followed up the dry stream bed until he had come to an abandoned shaft, and there, on the leveled space by the dump, he had established a hasty camp. To escape the rush of possible cloudbursts, his wagon had been dragged up on the bench, and from its interior a collection of bags and boxes had been spread out on the ground. Between two flat stones a fire was burning and, as Sales approached the camp, the girl appeared coming down a rocky trail with a jar of water on her head. Penhallow himself, with his back to the trail, was peering into an enormous copper-bound chest, but when the hound challenged, he closed it quickly and stood gazing fixedly at Sales.

"Young man," he called out, as Sales ignored his stare, "come down here. I want to speak with you."

Sales stopped and shook his head doubtfully. The hound, ignoring his master's perfunctory rebuke, had rushed out halfway to the trail, and as the stranger paused, he came bounding toward him, his shoulders bristling with rage.

"No, thanks," shouted Sales, as the dog kept on barking. "I can hear you all right from here."

"You, Turco!" stormed Penhallow, picking up a club and hurling it at the hound. "Down, sir! *Quite se!*" he thundered in Spanish, and the dog slunk under the wagon. "Now, sir"—he bowed with exquisite politeness—"may I ask you to honor my poor camp?"

Sales held back reluctantly, but finally acceded, though sorely against his will. No good, as he knew, was likely to come from anything that Penhallow might do; whereas it was becoming increasingly evident that the gold-rod man was destined to cause trouble. But it was better, perhaps, to humor his wishes, instead of openly bidding him defiance. So the young man turned off the trail and, plowing down the steep slope, crossed the gulch and entered the camp.

"Young man," began Penhallow, as Lewis faced him, "are you the person who was watching me from that bluff?"

"Yes, I am!" answered Sales, but after drawing down his black eyebrows, Penhallow waved the matter aside.

"Oh, very well," he said, with flattering good nature. "I thought it was some spy. But with you, sir, I am sure, my secret is as safe as if I had never been seen."

"What do you mean?" inquired Sales guardedly. "I didn't see anything. I was just up there prospecting along the rim."

"Don't apologize, my friend," returned the gold-rod man genially. "I

do not begrudge you what you have learned. To operate the gold rod and to understand its deviations are two different and entirely distinct things; and if you had been at my side while I was carrying on my researches, you would have been none the wiser for your pains. There is a law of the gold rod as there is a law of magnetism, to which, in fact, it is closely akin. The pull that you registered when you held my witch rod in your hands is akin to the action of a galvanometer, but of what use is either until its laws are understood and applied to the problem at hand?

"Now, just sit down a moment—allow me to offer you a box—and I will explain a little more what I mean. You mentioned yesterday that there is a decided difference between finding a coin in the dust and locating a lost vein of ore, and that therefore you doubted the practical value of my gold rod. Now, that is very true, and you showed that you are no tyro at reasoning when you noted that little defect. There have been divining rods before, and in every mining camp you will hear stories of how men have used them to seek out hidden coins. But in what camp, I ask you, will you hear of any man who has actually located ore? The history of the divining rod is a history of failure—because none of these men knew the law. They can dip the wand, as you did yesterday; but when it comes to the laws that control that deflection, they are as ignorant as any fool."

Penhallow paused and, as he gazed shrewdly at his visitor, the girl came into camp. She walked like an Indian, with an olla of water balanced gracefully on her head. But when Sales arose, she did not offer to speak to him, nor did her grandfather take cognizance of her presence. She put more wood on the fire and began to prepare a frugal meal, while Penhal-

low went on with his monologue. It was a wordy denunciation of the superstition and chicanery that had brought the divining rod into disrepute, and as the old man rambled on, Sales found his eyes wandering away to where the girl was preparing the food.

She was a silent creature, but as he watched her more closely, he perceived that she was in no sense a common drudge. Although she had shrunk from her grandfather when he had forced her to use the witch rod, her glance now was entirely devoid of fear. She seemed, in a way, to be deep in some reverie from which she looked up, surprised, when she was spoken to.

As the gold-rod man reached a period in his discourse, he made an imperative gesture; whereupon, Athene rose and gave him a sack of fine meal, with two cups and the jar of water.

"Mr. Sales, sir," Penhallow began, as he scooped out some of the meal, "I will introduce you to the finest food product in the world—pinole. Yes, a Mexican preparation—parched corn, ground fine and mixed with panocha sugar. Put a spoonful into your water and drink it slowly and you will experience no hunger for hours. It is the same parched corn that is spoken of in the Bible as the food of prophets and seers. But if we eat heavy foods and the dead flesh of animals, then our minds become staled and dead. When I am carrying on my experiments, I eat nothing for days but parched corn and a preparation of lentils. I am seventy-eight now, or it may be eighty, for I keep no record of time, and I still enjoy perfect health. Every tooth in my head is perfectly sound and my hair is too heavy to be combed. Is not that proof enough that right living is the best?"

He drew back his lips to display his fine teeth and supped slowly at his cup of pinole, which Sales found a little

watery. The girl, in turn, poured some meal into a cup and drank thoughtfully as she watched her cookery, but if she was in the least degree interested in the philosophy of her grandparent, she failed to make it evident. Calm-eyed and detached, she sat brooding by the fire, while Penhallow went on with his talk.

"Yes, right living is best," he continued reflectively, "with fasting and meditation. I am engaged at present in an undertaking of the greatest importance to mankind, and I find that there is nothing that clarifies my mind like a ten or twenty days' fast. A water fast, of course, for it is very necessary that the system should at all times be kept perfectly purified. Some time, my friend, when we are both at leisure, I will explain the principles of my life. But now that I have you away from that rabble, I wish to speak about my gold rod.

"I understood very well, when you threw down the switch and claimed that it would not work, the thought that was in your mind. It is best, of course, to mask our purposes from the common masses of men; but you know, and I know, that the rod worked perfectly, and so I can safely proceed. You may have noted further—for I see you are observant—that my little granddaughter has an aversion to the gold rod—not to the willow wand, mind you, or even to the silver rod, but to the gold rod. That is the true explanation of her temporary failure to locate the twenty-dollar coin, and it is for this reason that I have invited you down here.

"It is my belief, Mr. Sales, that every act of our lives is directed by an Omniscient Power. Call it God or Nature or the Divine Spirit—I quarrel with no man as to names—but I am convinced that you were sent for a purpose. That purpose, of course, is perfectly obvious, since you have the gift

of working the divining rod. You shall take it and operate it for me. I am occupied at this time with a problem so stupendous that the demonetization of gold dwindles to nothingness in comparison.

"You laugh? Then tell me, my friend, of what value is this accursed metal we call gold? We slave for it, we fight for it, we dig in the bowels of the earth to gain it and divert the currents of mighty rivers to wash it from their sands; but of what value is it to mankind? The only practical use to which it has ever been put is the filling of cavities in teeth. It is used, to be sure, in setting jewels and in gilding other objects of vanity; but were it not for some obsession, planted deep in our minds by the Power of Evil itself, it would long ago have been discarded—thrown aside as useless! Am I right, my friend, or not?"

He paused and fixed his eyes upon the startled young man, who was compelled to admit his logic.

"Very well," continued Penhallow, with a satisfied smile. "Now what can remove this obsession—this delusion that gold possesses value? It is a well-known fact that it is its scarcity alone that gives gold its fictitious value. Were it as common as dirt, it would be as valueless as dirt, since no one could put it to use. But take the noble metal copper, which, during the age of bronze, raised man from his primitive savagery to the mastery of all the world. What would be the result if copper were made more common? It would be put to a thousand more uses, and its value would not be destroyed. Is not that a proof, then, of what I say—that the value we place upon gold is purely a supposititious one; whereas copper can never be made common or base?"

He paused again, and his glance was so compelling that Sales was constrained to agree. If this man were

demented, as his actions seemed to indicate, he certainly possessed a logical mind. In fact, as he ran back over his argument, Sales was unable to discover a flaw. But of course it was all based upon the highly improbable premise that the divining rod could demonetize gold.

"Enough, then!" exclaimed Penhallow and, reaching into the heavy chest, he fetched out the silk-incased gold rod. "I have," he went on, as he balanced it lovingly, "two great works to do before I die. The first is to demonetize gold. The second—" He stopped and glanced at Sales with his black, intolerant eyes. "You doubt," he inquired with weighty sarcasm, "whether there is another task as great? Then I will tell you, my friend, there is such a task, and greater by ten thousand times! You smile? Very well, then—since you profess to be a scientist, and perhaps a metallurgist as well—why is it, my young friend, that with all your great laboratories you have never learned to temper copper?"

He leaned back triumphantly, and as Sales looked blank, he chuckled and slapped his leg.

"I see," he observed, "that this failure of modern science finds no ready apologist in you. Perhaps, with your limited outlook on life, you have never even noted that lack. But do you know, young man, that the highest-trained metallurgists, the greatest experts in metal to-day, have been trying for years to temper copper without one scintilla of success? Well, such are the facts, for our much-boasted civilization knows its failures as well as its successes. And yet here in this chest I have a chisel of copper that will bite a chip from pure steel."

He waited for the unbelief to come into Sales' eyes and then reached into his mysterious chest.

"Just test that, my friend," he said

nonchalantly, and brought forth a gleaming wedge.

Sales hefted it curiously and took note of its workmanship and especially of a grimacing head on the end. Then he tried its temper with his knife. But although the metal was copper, it resisted his attacks until he turned the edge of his blade.

"Now try it on your knife," suggested Penhallow quietly, and Sales scratched a faint line down the blade.

"Did you temper that yourself?" he asked in amazement, but the gold-rod man laughed and shook his head.

"If I had," he said, "my work would be done and I could get millions of dollars for the process. No, young man, that tool in your hand was tempered by a naked Indian in Yucatan. I saw his open shop, where he tempered both copper and steel, and it contained nothing but a forge and an anvil, with a bellows made of untanned skins. But by some secret and simple process, handed down from the ancient civilization of that land, he was hammering out copper knives that were as hard and springy as steel.

"He was only an *herrero*, a hard-working native blacksmith, and yet he had that secret in his brain! He chanted some charm, some formula of the priesthood, as I watched him at his work; but just at that moment when I had almost gained his secret, disaster fell upon me and I had to flee the country. But what can be done by a naked Indian can be done, with patience, by me; and if all else fails and my experiments come to nothing—then I will return to Yucatan!"

He took back the chisel and put it in the chest. Sales gave it up regretfully. It was certainly of copper, neither bronze nor brass, and its edge had scratched his steel; yet why had he never heard of it before? If there were Indians in Mexico who could temper copper, why had nobody stolen

their secret? Perhaps this story was on a par with that other—the plan for demonetizing gold.

"Yes," he said, with studied antagonism, "that's a pretty good chisel. But if there were anything to the process, it would have been gobbled up long ago by the Steel Trust."

The old man darted him a lightning glance and reached back into the chest.

"I see," he observed with cynical calm, "that I rated you too highly. You have still a few things to learn. Do you doubt for a moment that there is such a process, or think it could not be sold to the trust? Then in that respect your ignorance is abysmal, for the Steel Trust has been seeking it for years. They have, as I understand, a standing offer of several million dollars cash for the first man who will temper copper. For submerged work alone, where it would come in contact with water, it would be worth that reward and more; for it never rusts, as does iron and steel, but becomes harder still with immersion. Have you never heard of the enormous copper anchors in the national museum of Mexico? They are perfectly tempered and perfectly preserved, yet for several hundred years they lay beneath the water where Montezuma anchored his fleet. They were a present to the Aztec emperor from these same Indians among whom I passed. Well, since you have never seen them, look at this chisel. It was made by the Hopi priesthood."

He handed to Sales the second chisel, a plain tool with a razorlike edge, and stood back with folded arms. Sales seized it eagerly—for the Hopi villages were a scant two hundred miles away—and it, too, plowed a groove in steel.

"Where did you get this?" he asked with elaborate carelessness, but the gold-rod man held out his hand.

"Never mind," he said with sudden



"Who is this man?" he inquired, as Penhallow persisted, and Wadsworth drew him quickly aside.

finality. "I'll thank you for it back. And now let us return to our business, for I wish to make you an offer. As I told you before, I have perfected this rod and worked out its laws until now the demonetization of gold is simply a matter of detail. Some one must be enriched, though only tem-

porarily of course, before the world is convinced of its error. But when it comes to this mere grubbing of gold, my soul is revolted at the thought. It seems as if every vile and despicable passion to which human flesh is heir is aroused by this base metal, gold. I hate the touch of it, and more than

that, I hate the contact with these sons of Mammon who dig for it like blind, sordid moles. So I will give you my gold rod, since you possess the gift and are trained in the mining of ore; and all I ask is sufficient money to carry on my experiments with copper."

He smiled benignly and held out the gold rod, but Sales drew hastily away. Fascinated as he was, nay, almost stunned by the magnitude of the proposal, he was repelled by this swift gift. He felt intuitively, though he could not say how, the sinister quality of the man. His arguments were convincing—or, at least, unanswerable—but they had about them that specious reasonableness that Sales had heard was a gift of the insane. And the look in his eyes, even at rare moments when he smiled, had a terrifying suggestion of violence. He was quick, too, to anger and behind his soft words, Sales sensed the iron of a threat.

"No, I can't do it," he said and turned to go.

But the gold-rod man caught him by the arm.

"Not so fast!" he cried, and as Sales faced about, he saw the hound circling up from behind—the hound and then the girl, following swiftly after the dog, to seize and hold him back. "Not so fast, my friend," repeated Penhallow threateningly.

Sales struck his hand away.

"Keep your hands off of me!" he spat back resentfully, and Penhallow let him go. "Now call off your dog," he went on more quietly, and the gold-rod man spoke to his hound, though his eyes were glowing with rage.

"Very well," he said as Sales backed away, "but you have not treated me right, young man. You have spied on my work and pried into my secrets. But remember—those secrets are mine. I'm a man of few words, but

if you use them against me, be sure I will have my revenge."

He waved his hand in a sudden, curt dismissal, and Sales was glad to go.

CHAPTER V.

After having considered in succession two such astounding propositions as the tempering of the noble metal copper and the demonetizing of the base metal gold, Lewis Sales returned to camp in a turmoil of strange imaginings, through all of which he endeavored to assure himself that he had merely been dealing with a maniac. Yet, from motives of prudence, he concealed his adventure, for Wadsworth was notoriously censorious. Without being a mining man, he had all the narrow prejudices so often found in superintendents of mines, chief of which is an instinctive aversion to associating with social inferiors. When Sales, having worked underground, exchanged jokes with Dillon and the men, Wadsworth never failed to indicate his disapproval; but what would he say if, on the eve of Bratnomber's arrival, he learned that Sales had been talking with Penhallow?

If there is any one thing a mining engineer must learn, it is to cherish his professional reputation—among one class. That class is not the miners, nor yet the shift bosses and foremen, but the superintendents and the directors of mining companies. From these men, and these men alone, will come his opportunities for future advancement, and as a class they are very conservative. Being ignorant of the commonest details of the work, Wadsworth concealed his inefficiency behind a cloak of frigid exclusiveness and referred all inquiries to his foreman. And Dillon, shrewd Irishman that he was, veiled his contempt behind a cloak of seeming deference. So things stood at the mine and, knowing the at-

titude of Bratnombor, Sales restrained his natural impulse and said nothing about the gold-rod man.

Two days passed before the gleaming wind shield of an automobile, flashing at the turn of the road, announced the long-expected arrival of Bratnombor. He was a short, sturdy man, with bristling black hair, an iron-gray mustache, and a deep-lined, secretive face. His small, shifting eyes lighted up for a moment as he recognized his former student, but with Wadsworth and Dillon and the rest of the mine employees, he was distant as a sphinx. Even with the two directors of the company who had come along with him, he was only a shade less reserved and, excusing himself instantly, he beckoned peremptorily to Sales and demanded to see his notes.

Sales had entertained a secret hope, from certain cherished letters he had received, that Bratnombor would be accompanied by his daughter; but, knowing his chief, he led the way to his cabin and spread out his maps in silence. Then his grilling began, as the stern-eyed mining expert ran hastily over the young man's notes. Not a detail escaped him, and in two hours' time he had mastered all the facts.

"Now we'll look over the ground," he said to his assistant, and together they went underground.

At every point where Sales had taken samples or marked some departure of the vein, Bratnombor held up his candle and studied the formation with shrewd, unblinking eyes. Then, after scanning the walls through the faulted area and exploring each gallery and drift, he retired without saying a word.

The next morning at daylight, sitting rigid in his saddle, Bratnombor rode out to follow Sales' lines; and for hours, never speaking, he moved from point to point, taking measurements, verifying samples, checking up figures. A curious crowd hovered in the distance as he worked—the superintend-

ent, the directors, and others—and as he followed Sales' survey toward the final stake, they drew in closer and closer. A party of miners toiled up the trail to gaze scoffingly at this theoretical test and, roused at last from his passive resentment, Penhallow followed along with the rest.

The strike and dip of the fault plane having been determined, as well as the strike and dip of the vein, the heave or lateral shifting of the fault was to be established and the formations theoretically matched up. Bratnombor set a flag by the side of Sales' stake and then climbed laboriously up the cliff, and while he stood on the rim, the crowd grew larger, as the miners came up from below. The word was passed about that they were to sink another shaft in this far-off place, four hundred feet from their former workings. It would be two hundred feet at least before they pierced the plastic cap and made sure if the lode was there. Well, maybe it was there, you never can tell; but how could *he* know in one day? The professor, it was well known, was only a boy and a miserable hand with a single jack, and yet John Q. Bratnombor, the celebrated mining expert, had accepted his survey to a foot. They talked it over, muttering under their breaths, the men that would toil in that shaft; and all the time Bratnombor sat high up above them and looked out the lay of the land.

He rose at last, this grim, short-spoken expert who men claimed could sense out the ore, and as he clambered down the trail, Penhallow worked his way through the crowd. His flat-rimmed Indian hat was pulled low over his face and he held aloof from the rest; but Lewis Sales, for one, could feel the stab of his piercing eyes.

"What is this?" he asked, as the men gave way before him and he stood before the witness flag; and Sales was compelled to answer him.

"That's my stake," he said, "where I've located the new shaft to sink for the Oro Fino vein."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Penhallow. "This is very interesting! It so happens that I located the lost vein myself, and at no great distance from here. I located it, as you know, by the aid of my gold rod, and the coincidence is remarkable, to say the least."

"Who is that man?" asked a director of Wadsworth, but he scowled and shook his head.

So they stood in stony silence as Bratnomber approached, and Penhallow measured him scornfully with his eye. But Bratnomber, the mining expert, deep in some abstruse calculations, looked neither to the right nor to the left. Drawing out his steel tape, he gave one end to Sales and paced slowly back toward the west. He moved back and forth, cast his eyes up at the cliff and then across the hills to the north, and at last struck his heel into the ground.

"Sink here," he said, to Wadsworth and the directors, "and at two hundred feet or thereabouts, you will strike the lost body of ore."

"What, sir?" cried Penhallow, springing angrily to the front. "Will you steal my results to a foot?"

He stepped forth trembling, but Bratnomber glanced at him coldly and beckoned Sales to drive a stake.

"Who is this man?" he inquired, as Penhallow persisted, and Wadsworth drew him quickly aside.

One word in his ear and Bratnomber's lined face grew grimmer, then relaxed to a saturnine smile.

"Ah, I see."

He nodded and would have turned away, but the gold-rod man was not to be put off.

"Mr. Wadsworth!" he shouted. "I demand retribution! This man has stolen my results! He has placed his stake within three or four feet of the

mark that I placed on this rock. What care I for his wise looks and his walkings to and fro and climbings up and down the cliff? It was evident from the start that his mind was made up. And here, by your leave, is my mark!"

He pushed back a thin bush, and not three feet from the stake was a cross pecked on the blackened rock.

Bratnomber looked at it in silence, then turned to Wadsworth.

"Did you commission this man," he demanded sharply, "to go over this ground with his switch?"

"No, sir, I did not!" answered Wadsworth decisively. "On the contrary, I warned him away."

"Then what do you mean, sir," inquired Bratnomber of the gold-rod man, "by coming forward with these pretentious claims? You are nothing but a charlatan, and I know nothing of your crosses, your witch rod, or anything else."

He dismissed the old man with a shrug and turned away, but Penhallow stepped out and stopped him.

"You may say so—yes!" he began contentiously. "But is not Mr. Sales, here, your agent? Very well, on the morning when I felt out this ground, he was watching me from up on that cliff. And what would be easier than for him to inform you, and then have you locate this spot?"

"Yes, of course I was watching you," defended Lewis instantly, "because I saw you were following on my trail! I had gone past here that morning, looking over my lines, and you must have seen my stakes."

"I did not!" cried Penhallow. "I would scorn for one moment to follow the best mining engineer in the world. I have, as you know, sir, a specialized instrument that deviates for nothing but gold. And you know, Mr. Sales, if you will tell the truth, that I located this spot with my rod."

"Well, even so," contended Sales,

who felt his chief's eyes upon him, "I had located it long before you came. I can prove by my notes and the dates on my maps that I staked it two weeks ago."

"That will do, Sales," said Bratnomber, and at the implied rebuke, Sales fell silent and bit his lip.

He had spoken hastily and without that restraint that was so conspicuous a characteristic of his chief, but behind his anger and his quick resentment was the fear that even more would come out. In a heedless moment he had forgotten his position, and the strict etiquette of his profession, in order to pry into the pretenses of this charlatan; and now, with his genius for making trouble, Penhallow was turning it to account. Nor had he finished, for as Bratnomber cut him short, he addressed himself to Wadsworth.

"Very well, Mr. Superintendent," he said with great dignity, "we will leave this matter to the courts. I warn you now, and before these witnesses, that I shall contest the payment of this man's claim. I shall not only ask for an injunction, restraining your company from paying the amount agreed for this work, but I shall begin on my own part a counteraction, laying claim to the entire fee myself. And I shall furthermore begin suit against this gentleman, here, for slander in calling me a charlatan, as well as a civil suit for damages for appropriating the results of my work.

"You may think, my friends," he observed to the crowd, as Wadsworth's jaw dropped in dismay, "that because my methods are different from this engineer's, they will receive no protection from the courts. But I am not without knowledge of the law myself, and I assure you such is not the case. I shall summon Mr. Dillon, the foreman of the company, to testify to my demonstration of the gold rod; and I shall challenge him to deny that Mr.

Sales conducted that test or that it was anything but a complete success. I shall then call to witness my little granddaughter, who assisted me in locating this spot, and she will testify—and he will not deny it—that Mr. Sales was watching us from the cliff. And finally I will show that this gentleman, here, whose name I do not know, after a secret conference with his assistant, Mr. Sales, removed his stake some forty feet to the very spot I had marked. If that doesn't indicate a conspiracy to defraud, then I am very much mistaken."

He paused and folded his arms on his breast, and even Bratnomber paled. If there is any one thing that a mining expert dreads, it is to be summoned in a court of law. Though his time may be worth hundreds of dollars a day and be engaged for months in advance, he is compelled to remain at the call of the court until the case has been brought to a close. Upon such a man the veriest shyster can force the most onerous of compromises; and in a suit for damages, or even for slander, Penhallow might make out a good case. It was a time for compromise, even for humiliating abasements, and Bratnomber was quick to recognize it.

"Well, really, Mr. Wadsworth," he began after a silence, "we must admit this is a most unfortunate coincidence; and, while I do not for a moment admit the gentleman's contention that he is able to locate hidden ore with his instrument, I withdraw my statement that he is a charlatan and apologize for my hasty remarks."

He twisted his lips to the semblance of a smile and turned to Penhallow.

"Your apology is accepted, sir," returned the gold-rod man with asperity. "I allow myself to be outdone in courtesy by no man. But in regard to this unfortunate coincidence, as you choose to describe it, I cannot relinquish my claims."

"Very well, sir," replied Bratnomber, while all wondered at his moderation, "it is your privilege, then, to take it into court. But as I have received no payment, and do not expect to, until the faulted vein is found, I fail to see how you can sue to recover until the payment has been made. And if, as is not at all improbable considering the difficulties of the problem, it should turn out that my location is wrong, a first-class lawyer such as I always retain might even hold *you* liable for damages, for deceiving my assistant with your gold rod."

The smile that had twisted Bratnomber's stern lips now took a sinister, even threatening turn, and the gold-rod man seemed to consider for a moment before he spoke.

"Very well," he said at last. "That being the case, I will await the result of the work, but if this shaft reveals the faulted vein, I shall claim full payment for the work."

He bowed with great dignity and walked away, striding ahead of them down the cañon toward his camp, and as Bratnomber passed by and saw his wagon, he glanced back significantly at Wadsworth.

"Get rid of that man," he said under his breath. "He's the most dangerous kind of a crank."

CHAPTER VI.

It was a black day for Lewis Sales when, in the pride of his youth, he had tried to prove the gold rod a fake; and, after listening to a cutting reprimand from his chief, he promised to keep away from Penhallow. Then Bratnomber mounted swiftly into his waiting automobile and went whirling away across the desert and, watching his dust from the far point of the hill, Sales felt indescribably lonely. Not only was Bratnomber going back to the coast, where the hills were so soft

and green, but he was going back to his daughter Gladys without so much as mentioning her name. Was his assistant's devotion to Gladys such a secret, then, that her father had never heard of it; or was it true, as was commonly said, that Bratnomber wanted no failure for a son-in-law? Sales went back to his work with a serious face. He knew what it would mean to fail.

As for the new shaft, which was to test simultaneously both the efficacy of theoretical geology and the magic of the gold rod, it progressed but slowly, as there was a road to be built before they could install the hoist. Then the engine was delayed, and the timber for the sets, and Sales began to wander and prospect. That marked a relapse from his stern resolve, for who had ever heard of a prospector getting married or having any money? But Dillon had charge of the work at the shaft, and there was nothing else to do. And the winter rains had come—brief downpours of torrential waters that left belts of vivid green in their tracks—and the wind from the far heights called. He went out with a pick and a sack for his samples, but on the peaks he sat alone and dreamed.

That was a failing of Sales that Bratnomber had noted long before with disapproval. And he had noticed, also, that the young man would stop to look at flowers when he was sent up to sample some ledge; and every glance that was given to botany was lost, of course, to geology. But he could climb, none better, and on their trips into the field he had won a high place in Bratnomber's favor. No matter how high the quartz streak or reef, if the chief asked for a sample of the rock, Lewis Sales would climb up and get it—but on the way he *would* look at flowers!

Like some others of his profession, the great geologist, Bratnomber, had acquired a certain hardness from the

rocks, and it appeared in his estimate of men. By education and training, Sales was a good geologist, but at heart he was a nature man, a naturalist. But nature men never get married, either, or if they do, they never have any money. It is too pleasant a job, being a student of nature—the big pay is for doing something hard; and one who aspired to the hand of Gladys Bratnombler must come with something besides flowers. It was this that Lewis pondered as he sat up on the peaks, and he hardened his heart, like the rocks.

Since the rebuke of his chief, Sales had obeyed him scrupulously about keeping away from Penhallow, but as he started out one day to go up to the shaft, he forgot and took the cañon trail. In order to avoid the possibility of a meeting, he had been going around by the road, but this morning he was reading a letter from Gladys and his feet took the nearest way. He was roused from his letter by the gruff challenge of Turco, and the hound's instant yelp of surprise; and, looking down, he saw the granddaughter of Penhallow sitting on a blanket at the door of a brush hut. In one hand she held a rock, poised threateningly at Turco, and she looked up brightly and smiled.

Sales smiled in his turn and nodded his head, after which he returned to his letter. But that vision started a new train of thought. After his unfortunate experience with the presumptuous Penhallow, he had put him out of his mind, but now, as he came to the collar of the new shaft, he was reminded of a peculiar coincidence. Call it an accident, or any name he might, the fact remained that Bratnombler and the gold-rod man had agreed. They had agreed minutely, to within two or three feet, on the place where that shaft should be sunk—and yet Penhallow was a fake! But was he? If, at the end

of three months, when the shaft was finished, it opened up the apex of the lost vein, would it not in reality be a vindication of the gold rod as much as of theoretical geology?

According to logic it would, for they had both marked the same spot, and Penhallow had located it first. Sales climbed up on the rim to think it over, and his logic carried him farther. If, by the use of his instruments and other processes unknown, Penhallow had located this vein, what was there to prevent him from locating other ore bodies in ground not so difficult to work? But to concede that power was to grant Penhallow's contention that he could get possession of all the unmined ore in the world; and after that, there was no denying that he could actually demonetize gold. Having ended his speculations by the *reductio ad absurdum*, Sales rose and wandered aimlessly among the peaks. But when he returned, the fascination was still upon him, and he went down the trail past the gold-rod man's camp.

On the level patch of ground where the wagon stood, Penhallow's little granddaughter had built an Indian wikiup out of brush. It was framed of slender poles, set firmly in a circle with the tips joined and wattled at the peak, and over one side, where the rain winds beat, it was covered by a strip of white cloth. She was seated before it on a Navaho blanket with her fair hair spread out to the sun, and when Turco leaped out, she looked up quickly and called him back to her side. But when the hound returned, she settled back quietly and fluffed her hair out to dry. It was a pretty picture, this shy, girlish form half concealed beneath the masses of golden hair, and Sales walked more slowly as he passed by above her, meanwhile looking furtively about for Penhallow.

He was nowhere in sight, and Sales was passing on when he glimpsed a thin



"Don't you throw at that dog!" he commanded sharply.

column of smoke. It was rising from the mouth of the abandoned prospect hole and smelled vaguely of charcoal and blacksmithing. Sales stopped—and instantly the dog rushed out at him; but he had guessed the secret of the smoke. Leander Penhallow, the man with two great tasks to perform, was trying to temper copper. In the bottom of that hole, where no one could see him or steal the secrets of his art, he was toiling away on that really stupendous problem of hardening the noble metal, copper. And it had been hardened! Sales remembered still the cutting edges of those two precious chisels, and as the girl looked up, he wondered suddenly if he were not neglecting a great opportunity. As to the value of

the gold rod there might be two opinions, but there was only one regarding the tempering of copper. He had looked it up and made cautious inquiries, and the process would be worth millions of dollars.

He stood his ground, ignoring the hound, half tempted to break his promise; and as she ran out to drive back the dog, the girl looked up and smiled. It is not the part of youth to weigh and consider. Sales smiled back and raised his hat. Then he started slowly toward her, and she laid both hands on the dog. They came out to meet him, the girl and the dog, he growling, she holding him back; and as Sales stepped up on a high rock, she laughed and let go of the dog.

"He won't bite you," she said, "as long as I'm here—that is, unless grandfather comes up."

"What's he doing down that hole?" asked Lewis curiously, but she shrugged her shoulders and sighed.

"Oh, working on his copper," she said. "He does that all the time. Say, I saw you, up on the peak."

She pointed toward the dome, and Sales smiled at her indulgently. She was evidently very young.

"Is that so?" he observed. "I go up there sometimes. But what have you been doing to fluff out your hair?"

"Oh, I washed it this morning. I use amole, the Indian soap plant. But I've seen you there lots of times. You're a mystic, aren't you? You sit there for hours and hours."

Sales looked at her again, for her language puzzled him; she was so young and yet so old.

"What do you mean by a mystic?" he asked, without taking his eyes from the shaft. "You're pretty young, aren't you, to be using such big words?"

"Oh, no," she protested. "I've been a mystic for years. My mother was an adept."

"An adept?" repeated Sales, hardly believing his ears.

"Yes, an adept in the occult. She could read in Latin and Greek, and she always wore beautiful robes. And every evening, when the sun was low, she would go up and watch it set. She believed that the sight of anything beautiful would make people pure and good. Is that why you climb the hills?"

He evaded her eyes, looking across at the prospect hole from which came the clang of a hammer, but she waited until he replied.

"No, I don't think so," he answered. "The occult doesn't interest me half as much as some other things I know. Have you ever been down that hole where he is? I'd like to see him temper that copper."

She gazed at him curiously, and her gray, fearless eyes turned suddenly apprehensive and shy.

"No," she said, "he doesn't allow me. That's his kiva—like the Hopi priests have."

"Oh, that's the idea—he's got an underground workshop. Has he got a forge and anvil and everything?"

"Why, yes—er—no! Oh, I've got to go back," she burst out uneasily. "He doesn't let me talk to folks."

She laid hold on the hound, who resisted her stubbornly, and after a half-hearted tug, she stopped.

"I get awful lonely," she said with a sigh. "I thought maybe you were a mystic."

A sudden impulse to take advantage of her loneliness told Sales that he was learning his part. A mining engineer must be hard.

"Well, maybe I am!" he challenged with a smile. "Don't I sit on top of the hills?"

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed with an ecstatic glance. "What do you think of, up there all alone?"

"Oh," began Sales, "I look down on the hills and study out how they are made. I'm a geologist, you know, and we study rocks. That's the way we find the gold."

"I've got some gold," she said, still watching him worshipfully, and she drew out a necklace from her dress.

It was a string of nuggets, worn and polished from long use, and between them there were crude golden coins. Sales caught his breath and leaned down to look, at which Turco rumbled warningly in his throat.

"Would you like to have it?" she asked, still more shyly, but Lewis shook his head.

"No, little one," he said, taking shame at his duplicity, "I'm a hard-headed mining man, but I don't rob little girls of their gold."

He laughed rather shortly and

looked away, listening the while for the clangor of the hammer. It rang out again, striking steadily, almost fiercely, with a bell-like clearness in its tone, and he felt a great longing to see it fall.

"I've got some more," she urged, still holding up the necklace, and once more he met her eyes. Was she a child or not? Was she a girl—or a woman, made simple by living alone?

"Where did you get them?" he asked, affecting a pleasant carelessness, but she brushed back her hair and said nothing.

"Do you like my hair?" she asked, naïvely changing the subject, and he chuckled softly to himself.

"Very much," he said. "It reminds me of a girl—"

She drew back resentfully, and by the new light in her eyes, Sales knew suddenly that she was a woman. The old, shy pensiveness, the childish eagerness to please even at the loss of her necklace of gold, all went in a flash from the windows of her soul and revealed a strange and primitive jealousy.

"Was that letter from her?" she demanded sharply, and when he laughed, she turned away.

She glanced up again from beneath her tumbled hair and walked slowly back toward her wikiup. Sales stepped down off the rock, still laughing to himself, but on the trail he stopped and looked back. She sensed his glance and turned quickly to meet it, a sudden smile lighting up her sweet face. He bowed, and raised his hat in a formal farewell. After all, Athene was a woman.

CHAPTER VII.

A change came over Lewis Sales on the day when he met Athene, the woman. It made him more careful, for he was engaged to Gladys, but at the same time it made him curious.

He could not help thinking of her and, though he avoided the trail, he spied on her camp from the peaks. She was a child in her ways, and yet within her fair head reposed two secrets that might revolutionize the world. She had offered him her necklace as if it were a bauble, to be given lightly to win his regard, and yet every nugget was of pure gold. And she said she had more! Could it be possible that Penhallow had already demonstrated his divining rod, and filled that great chest with gold?

Sales thought on it deeply, climbing far up on the heights, where he could see the whole world below. It spread out before him, a great waste of mountains rising up in the deathless grandeur of the desert. They stretched far away, far across the silver river that led from the Grand Cañon to the sea, and in the spaces between hung a misty mantle, mauve and gray in the slanting light. It was the haze of dying sand storms, the whirling dust heads of countless wind devils, rushing down from narrow passes across dead lakes and alkali flats; yet there, in their hardihood, ventured other men like him, desert prospectors, wandering burro men, lured on by the very presence of death to seek for hidden gold. It was the spirit of the land—to dare greatly, to desire greatly—and after the treasure was taken, no one asked if it had been kindly done.

Sales forgot Athene's eyes, he forgot her golden hair that she had shaken out to catch his eye; but the necklace of nuggets and ancient coins, he remembered that. It was never absent from his thoughts. She had offered to give it to him, but she had something more precious—she knew whence it had come; and she knew, perhaps, the mystery of the gold rod and by what laws it led men to gold. As a mining engineer, as a hireling of Bratnombur driven about at his beck and call, what chance was there to amass

a great fortune, to be anything more than a slave? But as the possessor of a gold rod—or of the secret of tempering copper—the world must recognize his worth. And John Q. Bratnomb, who regarded him so slightly and made no mention of his love for Gladys, even the great Bratnomb himself must perforce swallow his prejudices if he demonstrated his ability to find gold.

All the great inventions, even the most logical of processes, had been denounced in their turn as fakes. It was so with the wireless; it was so with the telegraph; it was so with electricity and steam. The men who believed in them, who studied their strange processes and worked out from chaos a law, they had been laughed at as scornfully as Penhallow, the gold-rod man; but in the end they had won honor and wealth. And Penhallow had another principle only vaguely grasped, shading off into mystery and superstition; just as Marconi had his ether waves and Edison his electricity, which once had been considered the thunderbolt of God. Was it any more unreasonable that a willow switch should turn at the pull of gold than that water, heated, should generate steam and drive ships across the sea? No, it was only in the mind; it was the age-old prejudice against anything strange or new. And Lewis Sales knew, for he had felt it himself, that the witch rod would turn for gold!

But to try out the divining rod, to determine its mutations and the laws by which it was swayed, would require more money than he had, and to be seen using it would mean his instant dismissal. Yet, as assistant to Bratnomb, as a mining engineer, he would have immunity from the plagues that pursued Penhallow; and with the gold rod for his guide, unknown even to his employers, he might build up a reputation as a geologist. It was commonly said by men who knew him that Brat-

nomb "sensed out" the gold. Why not carry it farther and, without revealing his methods, check up his conclusions with the indicator?

Sales planned it all out, looking far away across the desert and then down at the lone camp below; and, while he was thinking of her, he saw Athene come out and stand looking up at the heights. Here was his problem. How was he to persuade Penhallow's granddaughter to reveal the secrets that she knew? Must he take advantage of her unconcealed regard for him, or was there some other way? He sat again, chin in hand, and gazed down on that distant form; and his dreaming, unpractical, unbusinesslike self protested that she had rights of her own. She was an innocent child, made over-friendly by loneliness and the preoccupation of her grandfather, and his attentions might lead her too far. Was he to go to this girl, who, with the naïveté of a child, had offered him a handful of gold, and deliberately beguile her into betraying the confidence of her domineering, half-demented old grandfather? He shook his head, but on the way back to Oro Fino, he took the cañon trail.

She was up on the point above their camp where she could watch the windings of the trail; but when she saw him, she sat still as a rabbit, while the hound rose up and bayed. Sales swung on down the trail, looking up at her from under his hat, and once more the spotted hound rose up and bayed. He was in a ferocious mood and, finding his mistress complacent, he rushed barking down the slope. But just as Lewis was reaching for a stone, Penhallow emerged from his hole. He was stripped to the waist and his white hair and beard were blackened by cinders and smoke. He gazed out at Sales grimly.

"Don't you throw at that dog!"

he commanded sharply, and Lewis dropped his rock.

He questioned swiftly whether to walk boldly down and beard Penhallow in his den, or to avoid him entirely and seek to gain his information from Athene at some other time. When Penhallow had intimidated every one by his threatened lawsuits, Sales had seen the cold-eyed Bratnomber outbluff him; but for him, or so it seemed, it was safer to ignore Penhallow and deal secretly with the unworldly Athene. So he strode on down the trail, and the gold-rod man watched him, while the hound raged furiously after him. Penhallow did not call him back, nor did Athene interfere, and Sales did not give him a look.

It is a common saying that you can tell the master by the dog that comes out of his house. If he bounces out joyously and runs up to meet you, his master is hospitable and kind; but if he is snarling and vicious, or meeching and servile, then the man will be the same. Penhallow's dog Turco was the embodiment of evil and, as he fixed Sales with his mismatched eyes, it seemed as if some devil of cunning malignity gleamed and grinned from his china-white orb. He followed on, barking, until Lewis rounded the point and reached vengefully for a handful of stones; and then, charging stiffly, he stood braced and baying until Sales went on to his cabin.

For the purposes of his work, Sales had a house by himself, half bachelor quarters, half laboratory and drafting room. It was over the hill from the rest of the houses, set up on a ridge for the breeze. There, as the sun went down in the west, he sat studying his problem. When he had been a student worker, doing his shift underground, the butt of Dillon and his men, he had been light-hearted and gay, though with little excuse; but now he was like Bratnomber and the rest. He had his great

problem, the same as they, and the sun set gloriously, unnoticed. It was the visit of Bratnomber that had hardened his heart—he had learned where he stood with Gladys. She was far away, in the midst of wealth and luxury, and he dared not offer her less. She was not the type that is content to live in tent houses and wait while the man proves his worth. It would take more than a living to satisfy Gladys, and to win her he must take a chance.

In the mining game, where the stroke of a pick may mean failure or wealth and every man of necessity is a gambler, the big rewards go to the men who play high. Some risk their lives, or their fortunes, or their good name; Lewis Sales staked his professional reputation. He chose to experiment with the witch rod. That night, as the moon came over the ridge, he cut a crocheted stick from a willow and hid it inside his shirt. Then, by roundabout trails, he made his way to the new shaft and paced back and forth in the moonlight.

The engine room was empty, the steel bucket hung idle, and the gallows frame loomed bare against the sky. A streak of gray muck, spewed down the side of the dump, showed the net results of the day, and by its size Sales reckoned shrewdly that three feet at most was the total ground pulled that shift. At that rate, it would be two months at least before they knew what there was at depth—two hundred feet of sinking down through barren country rock without the hope of even cutting a stringer. At thirty dollars a foot, that would come to six thousand dollars, a dead loss unless they encountered the ore. But with the witch rod, now—or with a specialized gold rod scientifically tested out and used—all that money could be saved and the work so directed that it would always lead to the vein! He glanced about, still reasoning to himself, and stealthily drew out the switch.

A limber willow switch, the crotch of a tree, how could it lead the way to gold? He grasped it awkwardly, and as the forked end bobbled, he held fast and waited for the thrill. It came—a sudden writhing of the stick, a firm pull, and a tingling up his arms! Yes, it worked, like the low-tension current of a battery; the switch ends seemed to thrill in his hands. The end dipped down, lower and lower as if by wave impulses, until the tender wood cracked beneath the strain. He moved to the east, away from the vein, and by degrees the tortured fork rose. He grasped it, going west, and slowly, rhythmically, the wand swung back and fell against his breast. That was the law of it, then—it could be stated in a formula or measured to a fraction of a degree. He stood over the vein, where it led on north of the shaft, and followed along its apex. The trend of the lost vein, as he had calculated it by the formation, was twenty degrees west of north, and the rod was leading him true. He fixed his eyes on the distant north star, and it did not diverge a degree.

He could follow the pull of that body of mineral as truly as the compass follows the north. He could not understand it; but neither, for that matter, could men understand the compass. All they knew was that, if undisturbed by outside influences, it pointed true to the magnetic pole; but what the pole was, or why the needle should point to it, was a mystery still unsolved. Yet men had sailed ships with the utmost confidence by the dip of that magic blade, and all its deviations and variations had been studied and recorded. Then why should not miners make a study of the gold rod and reduce its eccentricities to a science?

All thought of his whereabouts or the passage of time was lost as Sales followed his rod. He pressed on and on, over hills and down gulches, after

the tug of that hidden ore; and then, with a start, he suddenly realized that he was off the company's ground. He was on public land that was free to any one, and still the tug led on! What was to prevent him, then, from staking out a claim and getting a title to an extension of the vein? Nothing in the world. He had stumbled onto a secret that might net him millions of dollars! He had learned to locate ore!

But—Leander Penhallow had spoken of the limitations of the witch rod. It dipped for gold and silver, magnetic iron and running water, and it responded to certain laws. Even his gold rod, or so he had said, was useless unless corrected to those laws. It would locate coins, but it would not locate ore bodies except under certain rules. The hot fever of discovery cooled down in Sales' brain, and once more he began to think. He had the gift, to be sure—he could work the gold rod even when Penhallow himself could not—but what did that avail him when he did not understand its laws?

As he pondered, his feet took him back to the shaft, where Penhallow had located the gold. Here at last he had a checking point, the very spot that Penhallow had marked, and he whipped out his worn wand once more. Back and forth from that place where the mark had been made, east and west from the collar of the shaft, he felt out the ground, trying to discover some law; but he found no variation from the rod. At the very spot where the rod pulled strongest, Penhallow had made his mark, yet he had spoken learnedly of laws and abstruse calculations and of rules known only to him! Sales tried it once more, but as he paced out through the bushes, he jumped back and clutched for a rock. Coming in upon him, his white eye gleaming in the moonlight, was Turco, Penhallow's dog.

CHAPTER VIII.

Behind the silent, assured approach of this malevolent brute, Sales intuitively sensed the presence of Penhallow, and, overcoming his impulse to brain the hound, he threw his rod into the night. It fell lightly, but the dog caught the sound, and as his master came up from behind, he plunged away through the brush to retrieve it.

"Get out of that!" cried Sales and, catching up a stone, he hurled it after him; but the hound had smelled out the wand.

"What is this?" inquired Penhallow, as he came out into the open and Turco laid the rod at his feet. "Ah, yes, I see. It is a willow wand. Well done, my faithful Turco!"

He patted the dog on the head, and as Sales looked on hatefully, Penhallow indulged in a quiet laugh.

"Ah, well, Mr. Sales," he began almost insolently, "you reckoned without my friend. And let me warn you seriously never to throw another rock at him or he will turn and fly at your throat. I was sitting by my fire this evening when Turco began to snuff the breeze, which you observe blows from here toward my camp. He sniffed again, and then he growled, as he did when you went by this afternoon. That was his sign to me that you, Mr. Sales, were somewhere up the wind; for, rightly or not, he has come to dislike you, and I knew from his voice who it was. But I allow to every man what I demand for myself, the right to roam where he will; and it was only after several hours of his demonstrations that my curiosity brought me here. And so you are converted? Very well, my friend. I was waiting for that time."

He laughed again, and Sales drew back resentfully.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded.

"Only this," answered Penhallow,

"that you shall come to my camp and listen to a proposal I shall make. Otherwise, I must report this affair to that rare jester, Dillon, who will quickly noise it about."

He twirled the rod in his hand and, under the black shadow of his hat, Sales could catch the gleam of his teeth. So Penhallow considered that by his spying that night he held Sales within his power? Very well, let him think so, and when the night was over, they would see who had come out best. For there is such a thing as the double cross, in which duplicity get its just reward, and if any way opened up to get possession of the gold rod, Sales intended to take advantage of it. He would let Penhallow talk on and explain the lays of his rod and make any proposals he would, but as his part of the bargain he would demand a gold rod, and without it he would refuse to work. Sales divined what lay behind this conspiracy, this cheap attempt to betray him to Dillon. It was Athene's refusal to work. She hated the gold rod, and Penhallow needed him to work it in her stead.

"All right," he said. "But don't you worry about Dillon. He's a better friend of mine than you think."

"Ah, yes," agreed Penhallow, "but a great talker, truly. I was up here to see him to-day. He expressed the opinion that the vein is not here. And right there we became fast friends, for I told him he was right."

"But you located it here yourself," answered Sales, "and then claimed that you were robbed!"

"And robbed I was, as far as the intent was concerned," replied Penhallow with a vengeful laugh, "but I have not lived all these years for nothing. I have not gone through all the great mining camps of the West without learning about mining engineers. I made a mark, yes, upon the face of that rock; but did I even say that there



Athene stepped suddenly in his way. "Don't touch it!" she cried, and Penhallow seized her fiercely and whirled her out of his way.

was the vein? That cross marked a certain stage in the progression of my researches, but only with the money in my hands, will I mark the place to dig. But the vein is not there, and believe me, my friend, you will win no honor from your theft!"

"I have never stolen yet," returned Sales, "and I certainly never stole from you. So you can keep your gold rod and your wonderful secrets and run on and tattle to Dillon!"

He set off down the trail, but Penhallow followed after him and, though he walked his best, he could not out-distance him. They strode on down the cañon, but as they passed his camp, the gold-rod man spoke again.

"Come, peace, my friend," he said more kindly. "Nothing has been stolen, for the vein is not there, so why should we speak of theft? But if you will be reasonable, I will put you forever beyond the necessity of working for Bratnomber. You were groping in the dark with a common willow wand, trying to discover the apex of that vein. I offer you the use of a scientific instrument that will locate the place to a foot. It is late now, and no one will be passing. Come down to my fire and let me show you my rod."

"Will you tie up that dog?" demanded Lewis, and Penhallow nodded.

"Yes, more than that," he said.

"Without saying a word, by thought transference alone, I will make him as tame as a puppy."

He led the way to the dying fire, where Athene sat silently waiting and, taking a rope, he tied up the hound, which instantly became subdued.

"Now you see," boasted Penhallow, "how the mind of man has dominion over the beasts! Poor Turco, here, at a thought from me, is quiet as any lamb; but at other times, as when that bulldog assailed him, he fights with the courage of a man. I put my strong spirit into his lesser anima and, as you saw, he fought like a lion. It is fear, my friend, that weakens our tissues and makes us cowards in the crises of life; but I have trained my dog, as I have trained myself, to expect nothing but victory and success. So when you declined my offer to take advantage of my gold rod in locating that hidden vein, I did not despair, because I knew in my heart that you were destined to do that work."

He crouched by the fire and made a motion to Athene, who brought out a tray of food. Penhallow mixed some pinole and handed it to Sales, watching him thoughtfully as he sipped at it.

"Yes," he said, "from the moment you left me, I knew the heaven would work. You might return to geology, you might consort with Bratnombler, you might denounce me as a charlatan and a fake; but in the end, regardless of your will, I knew you were bound to return. You confessed as much to-night, when you experimented with the divining rod, so why not be perfectly reasonable? I believe, myself, that there is no power within us to resist our ultimate fate. Our wills control our actions, but our thoughts guide our wills, and who can say from whence they come? But this much is certain—while our minds form our thoughts, those same thoughts mold our minds, so that we follow, willy-nilly, the

promptings of the great Ultimate Mind. Have you been a student of philosophy, Mr. Sales? Oh, you have not. Well, let us speak, then, of the gold rod."

He went to the heavy copper-bound chest and brought out his case of indicators, then turned back and plucked out a sack. It was of heaviest leather, and as he dropped it on the ground, Sales knew instantly that it contained gold. Penhallow untied the cord, but as Lewis leaned forward to look, he paused and sat back on his heels.

"Before you can successfully operate the gold rod," he began in a far-away voice, "you must harmonize yourself with the universe. Every metal in the world, every substance in the world, has a vibration of its own. No two tones are the same, no two natures are the same, but in the universe is the great overtone of all. We all blend our natures, our individual vibrations, in that great vibration which we call the Divine Spirit. Some vibrations are evil and some are good, but the vibration of gold is evil. That is why it is necessary, before I trust you with my gold rod, that you should get in tune with the Infinite. Your nature is good, as Athene's is good, but both are adversely affected by the gold rod. With Athene there is an aversion, an instinctive repulsion, for the gold rod and its characteristic vibrations. She is repelled by the gold, but your more positive nature may be affected another way.

"As I told you before, the vibration of gold is evil, because the metal is essentially base. Its effect upon men has been observed throughout the ages; it makes them sordid, treacherous, and base, and especially it moves them to steal. Therefore, it is necessary that your nature should be harmonized. You must give up all carnal and material thoughts, purify yourself by right living, and consecrate your life

to truth. Then you will be able to carry out your mission—the destruction of man's greatest error, his belief in the value of gold. You will be able to live, as I have lived, the simple life of a recluse, though possessing a chestful of gold."

He laid his hand carelessly upon the copper-bound chest, and Sales' eyes grew big with astonishment. If this heavy chest from which he had taken the bag was filled in any part with gold, it was no time for sticking or haggling over terms—the gold rod had demonstrated its worth! He gazed at it, fascinated, and after a minute of silence, Penhallow untied the leather bag.

"Here is part of a treasure that I recovered from its hiding place," he said, and he fetched out a fistful of nuggets. "That was far down in Mexico, where, at the time of the Spanish conquest, the natives buried all their gold. But I was younger then, and hard bit with the madness, and I sought out their hiding places with my gold rod. I had the dream then of becoming a Croesus, the richest man in the world, but the death of my son and his lovely young wife quite weaned me away from the thought. Yet to prove to you, my friend, that my indicator is scientific, I will show you this remnant of my store."

He held out the nuggets, and as Sales clutched them eagerly, his dark eyes lit up with a smile.

"Ah, that is better," he said, but Athene rose up angrily from her place.

"I'm going," she said in a tragic voice, and Penhallow nodded his head impatiently.

"Good night," he said.

But she lingered behind him until Sales looked up and met her eyes. Then she shook her head warningly and with such a passion of resentment that he knew she was deeply stirred. But with the nuggets in his hand and

the gold rod before him, he took no notice, and Penhallow went on.

"That is gold, as you see, from an Aztec treasure house, each nugget having the impression of a hideous face curiously molded on some part of its surface. I discovered with my gold rod this secret hiding place, which, it seems, was jealously guarded by the people. But it brought me nothing but sorrow and unhappiness and the loss of my only son. I turned then to research, to seeking out the lost art by which those natives have tempered their copper. But my travels and experiments have almost used up my gold and I have no time now to hunt for more. But you, Mr. Sales, are in a different position. What say—shall we try the rod?"

He held out the gold rod, but as Lewis reached for it eagerly, Penhallow reconsidered and drew it away.

"First give me your word," he said almost threateningly, "to give me back the rod when I ask. I have had sad experiences with other men when I placed my gold rod in their hands."

"All right!" Sales agreed and reached out again, but Athene stepped suddenly in his way. She had lingered silently, unknown to Penhallow, to put her impassioned warning into words.

"Don't touch it!" she cried, and Penhallow seized her fiercely and whirled her out of his way.

"Keep away!" he commanded, and after meeting his glance, she bowed her head and withdrew.

"It is the curse of this rod," conceded Penhallow, "that invariably it makes men want to possess it. My granddaughter, here, has witnessed some grim scenes in the past—for I will allow no man to take advantage of me. But do you promise to give it back? Very well, I will try out your nature—whether at heart you are like all the rest."

He took back the nuggets that Sales held in his hand and tied them up in the bag. Then he dropped it on the ground and drew out the gold rod with a flourish. It was wrapped with buckskin from the handles to the fork, but there, where the mysterious "charm" was attached, the buckskin was incased in yellow silk. Sales looked at it curiously, and as he reached out to take it, his free hand instinctively sought out the charm.

"No, no, sir!" shouted Penhallow, snatching it quickly away again. "You must not feel of the end. It is delicately made, and any effort to tamper with it will inevitably destroy its potency."

He clasped the rod to his breast, which was heaving with excitement, and once more Athene signed Sales to desist.

"Well, all right," sulked Lewis. "If you don't want to trust me with it——"

"No, no!" exclaimed Penhallow, changing his tone on the instant. "Take the handles! Let us see if it will work!"

Sales took them unwillingly, for something in the girl's manner told him

that trouble was likely to ensue. But at the feel of the wrapped wires, at the magic thrill of the gold rod, he forgot her and everything else. He could feel a strong current like the tug of a battery, and the rod dipped like a thing of life. It roused in his being a great feeling of elation, of confidence in his ability to find gold, and as it swayed down to the bag, he clutched tighter at the wires, which bent evenly in his hands.

"It works!" he cried, and then roughly, abruptly, Penhallow reached out for the rod.

"Just a minute!" entreated Sales, holding on to it instinctively, but Penhallow responded with a jerk.

"Give it back!" he commanded, and as Sales came to himself, he let go, reluctantly, of the wires.

"Now go!" continued the gold-rod man, his eyes burning with hate. "And never come back here again. You have tried, sir, to steal my rod!"

"I have not!" denied Sales, but he stepped back quickly, for the hound was raging at his rope. Then, seeing the stark madness in Penhallow's eyes, he turned and dashed away.

The second installment of this extraordinary story, coming next month, develops in action and absorbing interest. No girl like Athene has ever moved through the pages of SMITH'S. She is as original as she is fascinating. Whoever reads of her in the May number will follow her with deepest interest to the remarkable conclusion of the story in the July issue.

A BIRD

MY heart's a little bird that sings—
That holds out both its wings
To feel all heaven lift it high.
Fly, little heart, then, fly!

My heart's a flashing bird that cries
Its joy before men's eyes
Like shining wares that merchants bring.
Sing, happy heart, then, sing!

My heart's a homing bird, its nest
The shelter of your breast.
Home's best, though skies are good to roam.
Come, little heart, come home!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

A Perfect Thirty-Six

By Pearl Doles Bell

Author of "His Harvest," "Gloria Gray: Love Pirate," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

A "Starve and Grow Thin" story, told with genuine humor, and taken from life itself.

MISS RHOONEY! Forward please!" called Miss Simpkins, from behind a rack of nineteen-forty-eight ladies' suits.

Miss Rhooney glared for an instant at the well-loaded rack, glanced reproachfully at the clock above the elevator at her left, and got up reluctantly from her chair.

"Ain't that the limit?" She looked around at the several other saleswomen who sat near.

"It sure is!" sympathized a tired-faced woman, coughing softly behind her handkerchief. "Nobody but Simp ever grabs a customer one minute before the bell rings for closing."

Miss Rhooney confirmed this by an emphatic nod of her superbly coiffed blond head.

"That's all right, Smithy," defended another woman, who was diligently polishing the nails of one hand on the palm of another. "You've got to hand it to Simpkins for making sales. Opening or closing time, it's——"

"Miss Rhooney!" came a strident voice from behind the nineteen-forty-eight rack. Then a head craned round from the rear. "Ain't you coming?"

Miss Rhooney looked at the head and knew that she hated scrawny necks, sharp noses, and thick-lensed glasses.

"Yes," said she, "I'm coming." Over her shoulder she whispered: "But I'm not trying to do no Barney Oldfield."

Suppressed snickers followed her, as she floated off to obey the strident

voice. She always *floated*. It was one of the reasons why the other girls liked to use her as a model. Simpkins herself had once said to her:

"Rhooney, you can make a last-season's suit that's been handed down to the basement from the third floor look like next year's latest. Why, if it wasn't for your snub nose and—and things like that, you could get in as a regular model for the third floor. Once when you was floating around in a fourteen-fifty shepherd check, I saw old Bernstein, over there by the elevator, watching you outta the corner of his eye. He'd put you in as model steady for his upstairs department if —— Well, you know. You should never uv bleached your hair. That kind of thing is all right for down here, but it wouldn't go with the swells that patternize the third floor."

Miss Rhooney *floated* now, with her eyes on the clock. But she did not properly gauge her steps, for it still lacked a few minutes to five when she moved around the rack and faced the impatient, but suave Miss Simpkins.

"Well?" frowned Miss Rhooney.

"This lady wishes to see how this suit looks on," cooed Miss Simpkins. Then, to the prospective customer: "She's got almost as good a figger as you, madam, and she'll slip this suit right on for you. Better hurry, Miss Rhooney. I want the lady to see it on. She can't afford to miss getting one of these bargains."



"There goes a button!" exclaimed Miss Simpkins complainingly. "This lady, here, seems to have got terrible fat sence the last time I called on her to model for a customer."

Miss Rhooney slipped the blue serge skirt over her head, pulled it into place around her waist, and drew in her breath as she fastened it.

"Oh, yes!" she confided to the hem, as she stooped to turn it down where it was folded back. "Simp is just crazy to have the lady get one of these *bar-gains*, because they're so outta date that there's a p. m. on them for the sales-ladies that sell them, and two per cent of nineteen-forty-eight is thirty-nine cents." She grunted under her breath. "Being a 'thank you' model ain't getting me no thirty-nine cents, and it's

going to make me late getting dressed for the dance."

She straightened and slid her arms into the sleeves of the jacket.

"Al always has to wait," she reflected bitterly. "I ain't ever ready when he calls. If this shop loafer with the 'fig-ger' would only——"

"Why, Miss Rhooney!" Miss Simpkins was tugging vainly at the buttons of the jacket. "You're getting *fat*!"

"Yes?" Miss Rhooney looked calmly down at the undulating curves that came within range of her eyes. It was not the first time she had heard this

accusation. Many of the girls had rather harped on the subject of late.

"Yes," she remarked sweetly, "I've taken on weight through being too obliging. Good nature is terribly fattening. Now, some people——"

"Will you stand still, Miss Rhooney? There! Now hold your breath."

Miss Rhooney shrank an inch, and several buttons passed through their respective buttonholes. Then she rebelled.

"Say, what's the idea, anyway? Can't you get a bigger size?"

"Not another one in stock, Miss Rhooney, and the lady likes this blue one better'n them browns."

"Oh, very well!" Miss Rhooney glanced contemptuously over Miss Simpkins' head at the waiting customer.

"There goes a button!" exclaimed Miss Simpkins complainingly. "I'm afraid, madam, you'll have to be satisfied with just seeing it on yourself. This lady, here, seems to have got terrible fat sence the last time I called on her to model for a customer, and as the first bell has rung, there ain't time to get another saleslady to try it on for you. It's—— Oh, yes, thank you *so* much, Miss Rhooney. As I was saying, madam——"

Miss Rhooney tossed the garments to a chair and floated, like something borne on a swift current, toward the elevator, where several of her fellow saleswomen were congregated.

In the sub-basement she put on her perky little hat before a small mirror that decorated the inside of her locker door, and a frown gathered on her usually smooth forehead.

"Gee, Simpkins is getting catty!" she burst out suddenly to the girl who shared her locker, as well as two rooms and a kitchenette in Harlem.

"What's the latest?" The young woman looked affectionately into the troubled face.

"Aw"—Miss Rhooney took a couple

of hairpins from her mouth and carefully pinned up a stray yellow lock—"she's that jealous of anybody that's got meat on their bones! If she wasn't so skinny herself, she——"

"She must have told you you was getting fat. Did she, Dot?"

"You guessed it!"

"It wasn't much of a guess, Dottie dear."

"No?"

"No. Look at that thirty-eight waist you got on. Why, that waist used to fit you, and now—if you sneezed in it, you'd get pinched for exposing——"

"Cut it, Net! Stop hanging crape and come on. Here's the elevator! I gotta beat it home. Look at my hair! No more wave than if I'd 'a' had a comfortable sleep last night, instead of torturing my head all night on wads of kid curlers. Honest, I feel like my scalp was covered with stone bruises.

"Stop pushing there, you with the sickly ostrich plume! Do you think this is your private limousine? Gracious, Nettie, did you see that girl under the pink landscape crowd into the car after it was already filled?"

"Had to do it, Blondy. Got a date, and I'm in a rush. Anyway, the car'd be crowded if there wasn't another person in it but you."

Miss Rhooney glared and lifted her little snub nose high in the air.

"Where we going to eat, Net?" she asked, as she paused a moment outside the exit of the great department store, to give a parting look at herself in the plate glass of the huge show window.

"Don't you think a nice little dinner at——"

"Say! If you spring that Italian joint on me to-night, I'll never forgive you; honest. Why, I'm that hungry I could eat the front right off this store. It's me for the place that gives the most food for the least money."

"Wedlemier's delicatessen!" Nettie groaned. "Dot, you ought to quit that

habit. Cold meats and doughnuts and—sticky spaghetti! It ain't no wonder you're getting fat. Ever since Wedlemier opened that——"

"Go on! Keep your little hammer busy. There's a tiny speck of cheer down in one corner of me that you ain't hit yet."

"But that stuff ain't good for you, Dottie!"

"That's right, Net. Have your own way. We'll go to your joint and buy fifty cents worth of indigestion. But, honest, I'd lots rather go over there to that hole in the ground and let it suck us in and carry us home, where we could buy a—pile of good things for the same money. But a course I got about as much to say as a clam with the toothache."

"All right." Nettie turned reluctantly toward the subway entrance. "Lead me to Wedlemier's. But you're getting awful fat, Dot; honest you are."

"Well, if I am, it ain't food that's doing it. I come by it decently. Both my parents were fat, and so were my grandparents. I inherited it."

"It's sure some estate, honey." Nettie McCarthy gathered up her skirts, as they began to descend the stairs that led downward from the sidewalk. "But it costs such a lot to keep it up."

"Don't be funny, Net."

"Can't help it. This crowd makes me hysterical."

"Drive ahead, Net. Gee! Did you get a squint at that *gentleman* that just plowed past? He was that polite he never used his fists once. It takes a real gentleman to use his elbows and umbrella when fists would do the job quicker."

"Yes—as I was saying to Al only last night when he was waiting for you to dress——"

"Waiting for me to dress! Huh! And he'll be doing it to-night. I tell you, Net, I'm going to quit this free

modeling for the other girls. It don't get me nothing but——"

"Never mind, dearie. Getting fat is going to save you all that trouble. You won't have to—— Say! It ain't your turn to pay. What'd you drop the tickets in for? Well, you gotta let me pay two days running, then. As I was saying—— Pardon me, mister, I wouldn't 'a' stuck my finger in your eye if you hadn't 'a' had your face resting on my shoulder. As I was saying, Net, being fat'll let you out of the modeling class. That's *something*."

Miss Rhooney tossed her pretty head.

"Listen here, Miss McCarthy! You better let up on that subject! I ain't heard nothing for the last hour but *fat*. Between you and Simpkins—— Just a minute, Net. We'd better slow up and allow Mr. Shonts to get into his private car. There! Now come on, Nettie. Squeeze in with the culture. Goodness, I don't see why people will spread out their newspapers on other people's backs! There ain't any use in living if you have to ride——"

"You spoke of Simpkins, Dottie. Did you know Al took her to lunch to-day?"

Miss Rhooney jerked her head from the breast of the man behind her and turned a tense face to Miss McCarthy.

"No, I didn't know it!" She caught at her full under lip with small white teeth. "And what's more, I don't know it now."

"Well, it's so, dearie. Simpkins has always had her eagle eye on Al. Only yesterday I heard her telling the girls that a tall, thin gentleman with *sense* always picked out a slender girl. She said they was scared of plumpness—that it made them have visions of the future when the contrast would make people turn round and laugh."

"How'd you know Al took her to lunch?"

"I saw them together in that new lunch room on Thirty-sixth Street. If



"Good evening, Al." She was very pretty as she smiled at her caller from the bedroom door.

you hadn't been having your lunch at the store, you'd have——"

"Been with you and—made a scene? Not much I wouldn't! If Mr. Alfred Glenning wants to take that old bone and a hank of hair to lunch, he's got my permission every time. He ain't ever—acted as—if—as if——"

"As if he thought you was getting out of the slender class? That's because he's a gentleman, dearie, and he's got tact."

"But I'm *not* fat!" flamed Miss Rhooney. "I'm a bit filled out, but I'm not——"

"You used to be a perfect thirty-six, honey. A forty'd fit you now."

Miss Rhooney turned her short little nose toward a soup advertisement overhead and fell into a scornful silence. But her blue eyes blinked unseeingly and her pretty mouth drooped tragically.

At Wedlemier's delicatessen, Nettie decided the dinner menu alone, after making vain efforts to interest Dottie in the temptingly displayed ready-to-eat foods. Then she led the way across the street to the building in which they lived. Four flights up, she unlocked a door, and they entered their stuffy little home.

"Now you get your hair dressed, Dottie," said Nettie, as she deposited her parcels on a small oilcloth-covered table, "and I'll have things ready in a jiffy."

A little later, when they sat at dinner, Nettie leaned anxiously across the table and looked solicitously into Dottie's suspiciously red eyes.

"You ain't sick, are you, dearie?"

"No, I ain't sick. Why?"

"You ain't eating nothing, and I thought you'd be glad about that potato salad. You're so fond of it."

Miss Rhooney looked moodily at the tempting salad.

"I guess even *fat* people don't have to eat if they're not hungry," she replied vehemently.

After an interval of silence:

"Gee, I wisht Al wasn't so bent on gong to that dance to-night! It's one of them lodge affairs where the papas and mamas come and expect you to dance with them. Honest, the last one we went to, the mamas must uv thought Al was Vernon Castle, the way they hung around him! Al said——"

The ringing of a bell interrupted her, and Nettie rose and went to the door, while Dottie flew to the small oak dresser that filled half their tiny bedroom.

"She'll be ready in a minute, Mr. Glenning," came Nettie's voice from the corridor door, and Dottie's heart beat fast at sound of the male voice that answered.

"S all right, Miss Nettie. I'll just decorate that sanitary couch over there, where the pillow department is."

"Dear God," whispered Dottie to the bubbly, wave-disfigured mirror, "I can't bear to lose him! I ain't really ever cared for anybody else. You know that, don't you? And he's so classy—and *good*, too. Ain't I seen him with my own eyes a-helping old ladies acrost the street and—and— Oh, dear God, if he likes skinny people, then I'll—starve myself to death! I'll starve, honest I will! But please"—the drooping lips lifted and dimpled uncertainly at the corners—"please make Wedlemier move away!"

She brushed a plump little hand across the damp lashes of her eyes and caught up her worn last-season's jacket.

"Good evening, Al."

She was very pretty as she smiled at her caller from the bedroom door.

Mr. Glenning unfolded and, rising from the couch, extended his hand. Dottie thought he had never looked so

handsome. Even the hollowness of his cheeks, the slightly sunken brown eyes, and the exaggerated length of his arms and legs, seemed to have taken on a new attractiveness.

They bade Nettie McCarthy a pre-occupied good night and started down the ill-lighted stairs. On the sidewalk in front of the building, Dottie paused and looked up at her escort.

"How far is the hall?"

"About eight or nine blocks. Why?"

"Because I'd like to walk. I—I got something I want to talk about. Mr. Glenning——"

"I thought you promised to can that '*mister*.' I was under the impression that you agreed——"

"I—I forgot, Al." Dottie put her hand shyly through his arm. "I always *think* of you as 'Al.'"

"That's right, girly. And now we'd better be hitting the high places."

Dottie's heart grew heavier. He had never been in a hurry before when he had been alone with her.

"It's just like Nettie said," she whispered to herself. "I'm not the same girl I was when he first strolled round from the tinware to the ladies'-suit department. I ain't a—a perfect thirty-six—any more. I—I'm *fat*."

"Now, sweetie, what's this you want to talk about?"

They were under a street light at the moment, it is true, but Dottie's eyes filled as he dropped his caressing fingers from her hand.

"Oh, nothing—much." She shook her blond head.

"Must be something, peaches. Let's have it."

Dottie watched the street light at the other end of the block waver and multiply.

"I was—going to ask you——" She paused, suddenly conscious that she had no right—no real *engaged* right—to question Al Glenning as to his con-

duct. If he wanted to take Simpkins to lunch, why—why——

"Yes, you was going to ask me—— Go on, honeysuckle. What's sticking in your pretty throat?"

"Is it pretty; Al, honest?"

"What, girlie?"

"My—my throat."

"Surest thing you know!"

"Then, you wouldn't——"

"Wouldn't what?"

"Want it any—different?"

"I don't get you, sweetness. Do you mean, would I like it any—any——"

"Any more like—Miss Simpkins'." Dottie's voice was wistful.

"Miss Simpkins *has* rather a nice neck, come to think of it. But of course——"

Dottie gasped.

"It's *thin*," she gulped.

"Slenderness is not so terrible, my dear."

Alfred Glenning drew himself up to his most attenuated height, but the hint of defiance in his voice meant one thing and one thing only to Dottie. *He was defending Simpkins!* He was letting her know that he preferred slenderness to——

"It's scrawny!" She was back again at the throat of Miss Simpkins.

"Why, kiddo! You're trembling like a leaf! What's the matter? Sick?"

Dottie shook her head and turned away from the solicitous eyes.

"I guess you been working too hard. It's been a bad summer, and you ain't had your vacation yet. August-ain't the best time for it, either. Every place'll be crowded. You should uv got off in July when I took mine, like I wanted you to."

"Sure! Vandermaker's sent a special committee around to the basement to find out just what part of the summer would suit me best, but I told them I couldn't bear to leave my darling duties as long as I could still stand up and paw over cheap suits." Dottie

sighed. "But the committee came down the other day and just insisted that I start my vacation next week. They're so thoughtful of me."

Mr. Glenning laughed.

"If you're going away Monday, maybe I could come up and spend the next Sunday with you. Where you decided to go?"

"I ain't decided yet. But, anyway, I ain't going to give no house parties. I told Nettie to-night that I ain't even going to let her know where I am. I'm going off and pretend I never heard of Vandermaker's. And believe me, I gotta do some forgetting!"

Mr. Glenning argued that she ought at least to write occasionally while she was away, but Dottie was adamant, and they fell into a pouting silence.

Dottie sighed again and again, but the man at her side failed to inquire as to the reason, and Dottie was more than ever sure that he no longer cared as he once had. For he *had* cared! She was sure of that. Why, it was only a few Sundays ago that he had—kissed her for the first time, and he had said—he had said:

"I've gotta kiss you, sweetness, because I'm mad about you!"

Oh, yes, he had cared, all right. And he would still care, if that delicatessen hadn't opened up right across the street from where she lived. That place, with its pies and puddings—— Ugh! She could have killed fat little Mr. Wedlemier, who smiled wickedly as he sold you the things that were going to make you a forty instead of a thirty-six. Maybe she would kill him! Maybe——

"Here we are, girlie!"

Al Glenning was helping her up the steps to the entrance of the hall.

"Now you go on to the ladies' wardrobe," he directed, "and leave your lid. I'll wait for you here."

And so began that wretched night.

It was not that Al neglected her. He had seldom been more attentive. But



"You got the wrong ticket, Mr. Freshie. Where'd you get that neronious idea?"

the sting lay in that very attentiveness, for there was a gentleness in it that Dottie interpreted as *pity*.

Once, during the evening, he invited her to have some refreshments, and Dottie's brooding eyes lighted hungrily.

"I thought that'd wake you up, kiddo." Mr. Glenning smiled. "The eats never bore you none, and whenever I see your little white teeth cutting into a dollar, I always says to myself, 'It's worth the price.' You sure do like

to—— Why, what's the matter?"

"You got the wrong ticket, Mr. Freshie. Where'd you get that neronious idea?"

"Why, I thought—— you'd like something——"

"To eat? Well, you shouldn't think. It's liable to make your head ache. Besides, you better spend your change on Miss Simpkins. *She* ought to eat a lot. She needs it. If I was as skinny as her, I'd buy a delicatessen and eat it up or——or get myself baked in a cake as big as a house and then eat my way out."

"Say, listen here, kiddo! What's got into you to-night, anyway?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all," declared Dottie. Then, to herself: "Not even Wedlemier's potato salad."

Mr. Glenning bent a yard of himself persuasively over her.

"They've got some cheese sandwiches and custard pie at the re-

freshment counter, also some chocolate creams, and them's your favorite confections. Come on, little kewpie. I'll buy out the place."

"No, I ain't coming." Dottie turned her gaze determinedly in the direction opposite that in which was the refreshment counter. "And what's more, I'll thank you to not call me 'kewpie.' I may look like one"—her lips trembled—"but I ain't crazy about being reminded of it."

And all the rest of the evening, she was haunted by sandwiches, pies, and chocolate creams that gloated over her unappeased hunger and bitterness of heart.

"Gee, girlie, I can't get your number, some way, to-night!" Mr. Glenning exclaimed, as he stood with Dottie outside her door a little after midnight. "You sure got me guessing. But believe me, kid, you're all to the good with me, no matter *how* you act."

"Honest, Al? Honest to God?"

Mr. Glenning caught the wistful face between his two long hands, and something in his nice eyes lifted a little of the despair from Dottie's heavy heart.

"Honest to God, sweetness!"

"Oh, Al!"

She crumpled up in his arms, and he fell to kissing her, but in a moment she struggled out of his clasp and faced him.

"If—it's true—what you said—I won't mind suffering for you. I—I want to—to be just what *you* want me to be."

"Suffering? Say! You're sick, sweetness! You ain't talked right all evening." Al Glenning's face wore a puzzled look. "I guess you need that rest, all right. That basement's kind of getting under your hat."

"I—I wisht the—the *rest* was all over, and that I was back here again, Al. It'll be lonesome, not hearing from you. But I'll call up the minute I get in town and let you know."

"But ain't you going to let me see you to-morrow—Sunday?"

"I guess not, seeing that I'm going in the morning."

"But I thought you wasn't going till Monday and that—"

"That I hadn't decided where to go? Well, I'm a-going to look at the ads in the morning papers and shut my eyes and—take my choice. Then I'm a-going to pack a grip and—and start. They ain't any use waiting till Monday."

"Oh, very well." Mr. Glenning drew back coldly. "If that's the way you feel about it. Good night."

And he went down the stairs just like that—not once looking back.

"He don't care no more," whispered Dottie Rhooney, as she watched him disappear and then listened to his retreating footsteps. "To think he could go—like *that*! And—me—*me* that's ready to starve for him—going away for two weeks!"

She went forlornly into the tiny flat and, undressing in the dark, crawled into bed beside the sleeping Miss McCarthy, where her lumpy pillow was soon wet with bitter tears.

It was exactly two weeks later that Dottie Rhooney walked into the drug store next door to Wedlemier's delicatessen and entered a telephone booth. She set her shabby suit case on the floor and extracted a nickel from her purse.

"Hello! Is that Vandermaker's?" she called into the receiver, after getting her number. "Well, I want the tinware in the basement. What? I said 'basement.' Don't get fresh, young lady! You ain't— Hello! This the tinware? Yes. I want to speak to Mr. Alfred Glenning. (Gee, I hope that guy gets a move on him! It's as hot in here as it is sometimes down in the suits on sales day. And—I'm that sick my legs is bending under me like they was made of rubber. And then—not hearing from anybody all that century I been away— I ain't sure but what Simpkins—) Hello! Oh, Al! Is that you? Yes, this is Dottie. Gee, Al, don't go so fast! I can't answer all them questions at once. What? Now, Al! Don't! If you're going to be sore, I'll go away again, honest I will. Al, why, Al! Of course I didn't run off with anybody! How could you uv thought of such a thing? I—I just went to get a—a rest and to do—something I—wanted to do. Yes. I'll tell

you about it when you come up to-night. You *are* coming up to-night, ain't you, Al? Aw, Al! Do you mean that, honest? No. And I guess you wasn't any lonesomer than I was. Honest, Al? Honest? Oh, Al! Will I? *Will* I? I'd rather wait a little while, Al. I'd like to get some clothes first. Oh, Al, you're sure you ain't making no mistake? You're sure? Well, till to-night, then. Good-by, Al. Good-by."

For a moment Dottie leaned against the telephone with closed eyes, her heart beating happily. Then she called up the ladies' suits and told Nettie McCarthy of her return. After that, she climbed the four flights of stairs in the building across the street and once more entered the place she called home.

She stood for an instant looking around at the familiar old things as if she had been away from them interminable years. She touched one or two of them tenderly, and tears rushed to her blue eyes. Then she moved hurriedly over to the small oak dresser, where she smiled joyously at her reflection.

"You've sure changed some, Dottie Rhooney. Them two weeks did their best to kill you."

It was a perfect thirty-six that smiled back at her with rather pale lips and great shadow-encircled eyes.

"You had a lot of fun putting on them twenty pounds, all right. But take it from me, you didn't have nothing like fun a-getting them off."

She shook her head mournfully.

"God, it was awful! If I'd 'a' known that farmhouses have such good things to eat, I'd never have gone to one. I'd have gone to an uninhabited island, if there's such a thing close to New York.

"I'll never forget them weeks! Never! With food a-smelling all over the place, and me eating nothing but sour apples. That time I thought I was going to die, if I could have found him,

I'd uv killed the doctor that put the thing in the newspaper saying a diet of apples would reduce anybody a pound a day. I guess he never felt his stomach trying to push its way through his backbone. I guess he never heard it shrieking, like something that's being murdered."

She sighed.

"Look at yourself, Dottie Rhooney! Ain't you a mess? If I didn't feel your heart beating like mad, I'd ask how long you'd been dead, and when you was going to have your funeral. And look at that taffeta dress you got on! A month ago you put all them splits in it, trying to make it believe it was three sizes bigger than it is, and now it's hanging on you like a rag on a broomstick.

"It was awful, them weeks! But it was worth it. He'll be proud of you again. It'll be something to him to dance again with the only perfect thirty-six on the floor. Oh, you lucky girl! Ain't you got a lot to be happy for? Oh, ain't you, though? He just asked you——"

The doorbell rang brassily.

"Well! Who——"

She flew to the door and flung it open.

"Al!"

"Dottie! I couldn't wait! I got off early!"

Two long arms closed round Dottie Rhooney's slender figure, and her eyes were pressed shut by eager masculine lips. Then suddenly the arms held her off for inspection.

"Dot! My God, Dot! You've been sick!"

Mr. Glenning's voice was but an awed whisper.

Dot raised her shadowed eyelids.

"Al!" She almost shrieked it as her gaze fastened upon his face. "What—what in the world has happened to you?"

Mr. Glenning blushed.

"Never mind me. You've been sick. I want to know about it."

"No. I wasn't exactly sick, Al. I just——"

And then, leaning weakly against the wall, her fascinated gaze never leaving his face, and laboring under a wild impulse to break into hysterical laughter, Dottie told Al Glenning what she had intended never to tell him—the history of the tragic weeks through which she had just passed. At the end of the recital, Mr. Glenning caught her roughly to him.

"Why, you poor kid, you! I never really learned to love you till you began to get——"

"Fat?" Dottie's eyes grew round.

"Plump!"

"Then you didn't like Simpkins?"

"Never!"

Dottie buried her face joyously against his breast for one brief instant. Then she lifted it quickly, contritely.

"And now—what—*what on earth* has happened to you, Al? You look like you'd been poisoned. You're all swelled——"

"It's your fault, sweetness. I knew from the way you talked that last night about Simpkins that you hated thin people, and"—Mr. Glenning looked suddenly nauseated—"I been living on chocolate and cheese sandwiches ever since. I—I hope——"

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" Dottie doubled over and held her sides. "Oh, Al, Al!" She shook under the violence of her emotion.

When she raised her blue eyes at last,

they were wet, and her lips were quivering with ebbing laughter.

"Ain't we the limit, Al? Ain't we?" she gasped. "Here for two weeks I been starving myself to death for you, and you been eating yourself to death for me. Ain't we the limit, though?"

"Then you really don't want me——"

"Fat? Not in a thousand years! Why, your collar looks like it was choking you, and your pants—your—pants—— Oh! Oh! Oh!" She rocked to and fro, and her laughter came in little gasps.

Mr. Glenning went a deeper red.

"Of course"—he stiffened perceptibly—"you're laughing because you can't see yourself. If you could see how funny *you* look! And to think Nettie just told me that old Bernstein said he was going to cater a little more to stout women in future, and that he guessed he could use you as a third-floor model. Said he thought you was about a perfect forty. I—I'm telling you what Nettie just—just told me. But of course now that you're——"

"Well, can you beat *that*? I ask you, Al, from the bottom of my utter emptiness, can you beat it?"

Dottie stared at the man, who leaned against the opposite corridor wall, and the corners of her mouth began to dimple. Then, snatching her rakish hat from a hook inside the door, she caught one of his arms excitedly.

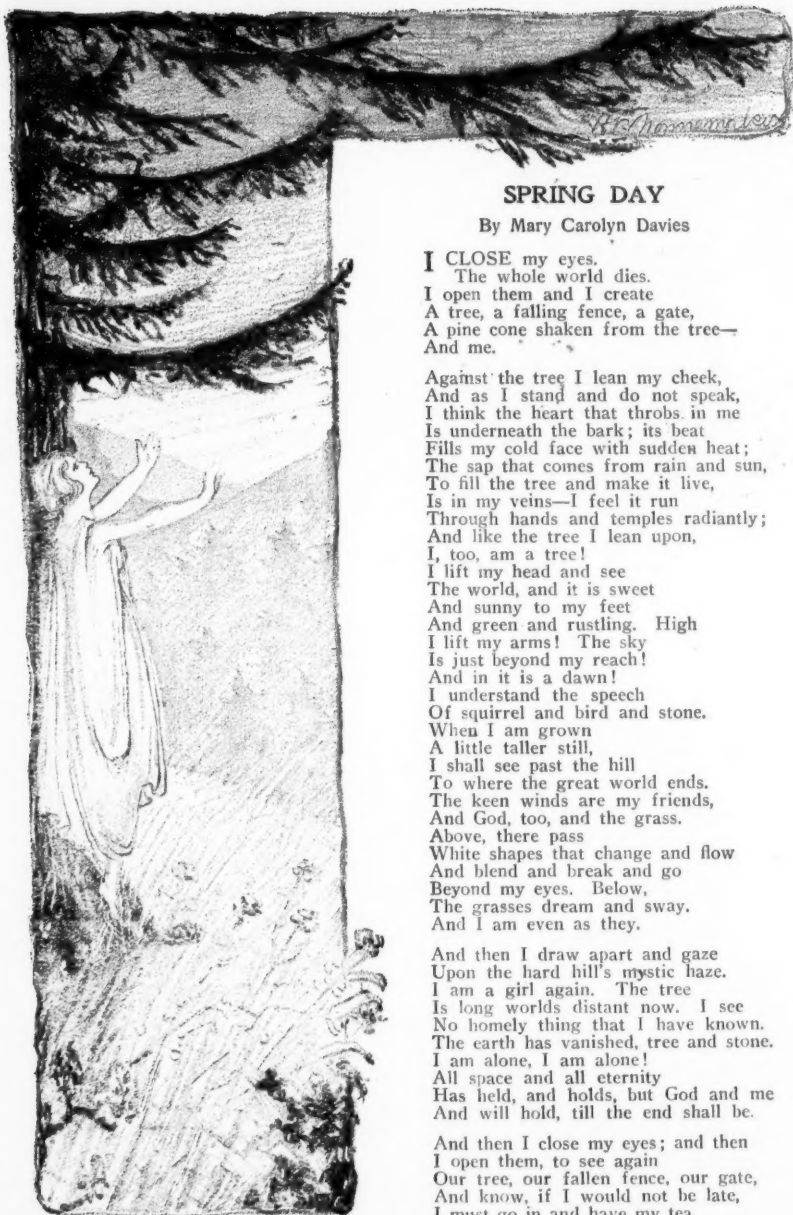
"We're going to switch diets, Al, and we're a-going to do it in about the time it'll take us to get to the nearest sour-apple place and the very closest chocolate shop."



DID HE GO?

THE late Ex-president Taylor, of Vassar, used to say that one of his choicest possessions was a telegram he received during the busy opening days of college from a young freshman "out of the West."

"Shall arrive in Poughkeepsie at three to-day," it said. "Meet me at the station with a cab."



SPRING DAY

By Mary Carolyn Davies

I CLOSE my eyes.
The whole world dies.
I open them and I create
A tree, a falling fence, a gate,
A pine cone shaken from the tree—
And me.

Against the tree I lean my cheek,
And as I stand and do not speak,
I think the heart that throbs in me
Is underneath the bark; its beat
Fills my cold face with sudden heat;
The sap that comes from rain and sun,
To fill the tree and make it live,
Is in my veins—I feel it run
Through hands and temples radiantly;
And like the tree I lean upon,
I, too, am a tree!
I lift my head and see
The world, and it is sweet
And sunny to my feet
And green and rustling. High
I lift my arms! The sky
Is just beyond my reach!
And in it is a dawn!
I understand the speech
Of squirrel and bird and stone.
When I am grown
A little taller still,
I shall see past the hill
To where the great world ends.
The keen winds are my friends,
And God, too, and the grass.
Above, there pass
White shapes that change and flow
And blend and break and go
Beyond my eyes. Below,
The grasses dream and sway.
And I am even as they.

And then I draw apart and gaze
Upon the hard hill's mystic haze.
I am a girl again. The tree
Is long worlds distant now. I see
No homely thing that I have known.
The earth has vanished, tree and stone.
I am alone, I am alone!
All space and all eternity
Has held, and holds, but God and me
And will hold, till the end shall be.

And then I close my eyes; and then
I open them, to see again
Our tree, our fallen fence, our gate,
And know, if I would not be late,
I must go in and have my tea.

Protecting *the* Kid

By Bessie R. Hoover

Author of "Pa' Flickinger's Folks," "Opal," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD THOMAS DENISON

How little Elsa Flaxman's father came near to overdoing his protection. A bit of realism written with exquisite insight.

DO I have to sit here *all* the evening?" demanded the sullen-faced little girl.

She sat by the living-room table, with the gaslight streaming over her pale-yellow hair and vivid-blue hair ribbons. Before her lay an open arithmetic and a mutilated tablet, and she held the stub of a lead pencil in her small right hand. As the voices of other children at play came temptingly through the open windows, she looked anxiously from her stern father, who occupied the largest rocking-chair in the comfortably furnished room, to her comely young mother, who sat crocheting an intricate length of lace.

"Do I have to stay in the house?" she insisted.

"Sure you do, kid. Ain't you got your problems to work out?" asked Dave Flaxman, her father, harshly.

He was a heavy man in a well-made business suit and speckless collar and cuffs, and he seemed to fill the pleasant room to overflowing with his dominant personality.

"My problems are all done," informed the child, whose rose-leaf complexion and chubby form contrasted queerly with her pouting face and sullen voice. She was, with all her pretty roundness and delicately bright coloring, a miniature edition of her father, who looked at her now with secret pride.

"Then do your problems again. You

can't learn too much 'rithmetic," he solemnly assured her. "And when you get older, papa'll have you down at his office to do accounts," referring to himself in the third person.

Elsa Flaxman drooped reluctantly over the disagreeable task of doing her problems a second time. She could still hear the voices of her playmates as they ran about the near-by lawns of the pleasant residence street on which her father, a prosperous manufacturer in a small way, had a modest home.

Suddenly she slapped the worn leaves of the arithmetic together and looked at her mother defiantly. Mrs. Flaxman slowly shook her head. She was a fine-faced young woman, with glossy chestnut hair; and it was apparent from her gentle, but determined manner that she did not always submit to her husband's whims and commands.

"Seven times seven, kid?" shortly demanded Elsa's father.

"I always forget," returned the small girl, her tone clearly adding, "And I don't care if I do."

"What would happen to me if I forgot the multiplication table?" questioned Flaxman in a scandalized voice, which clearly implied that his business would crumble to pieces. "Seven times seven is forty-nine. Now, kid, what's eight times three?"

"Twenty-four," noiselessly signaled Mrs. Flaxman with her lips, and Elsa promptly answered.



"But why did you marry our mamma, if you'd rather had that old Alindy?" questioned Elsa.

"I'm glad there's one you know," approved her father. "Keep a-goin', kid."

"Huh!" laughed the child, amused at the deception that he had not noticed.

Then she began to mark busily in the tablet; and her observant mother knew that she was drawing the picture of a large man with enormous ears, and only pretending to do her problems.

"I got to thinking of Alindy Beach to-day, Mame," said Dave Flaxman pleasantly. He was fond of talking to his wife after the cares of the day, though it could not always be called conversation, as a monologue pleased him just as well. But occasionally, if Mame Flaxman considered it worth while, she talked, too. "You know I

could have married Alindy Beach, Mame, and I would—if you hadn't come along with your flossy hair. I was all but engaged to her. I says: 'Alindy, ain't we knowed each other about long enough as friends?' and she——"

"Dave, I've heard that story about a million times," placidly broke in his wife. "Tell us another."

"I've been a-thinking about Alindy lately—I dunno why. But one thing I do know—she wouldn't always have taken the kid's part, the way you do."

"Elsa would have been dead and buried between you two—or else a little mummy. But sometimes I wish you *had* married Alindy," claimed his wife without malice, but with just enough

edge to her voice to show that she really meant what she said.

"Was Alindy Beach anything like you, mamma?" asked the child curiously, with one sly finger in her arithmetic and her tablet closed over the grotesque picture of her father.

"Land, no!" smiled Mame Flaxman, showing her even white teeth in an amused smile. "She was taller and thinner and she hadn't much chin, and then she talked in a kind of flat, sing-song way."

"Huh!" laughed Elsa; then added, "Did she want to marry our papa?"

"I reckon she did, honey," allowed Mame with a sigh, which seemed to add, "And she should have had him, too."

"Alindy wasn't so homely after you got to know her," struck in Flaxman. "She was some older than me, and she found me when I was a hoodlum and invited me to her Sunday-school class. And before Alindy took me in hand, I never had a woman friend. My mother died when I was a baby, and my father was a bartender. What do you think of that, kid?"

As Elsa only stared at her father and said nothing, her mother explained:

"She doesn't understand all that means, Dave."

"But she would, if she'd been allowed to grow up wild like I did. My father didn't have a good awning business like I've got. And he didn't treat me as I treat you, kid. When I was your age, I was hired out to a grocer and slept under the counter like a cat. And I grewed wilder and wilder till Alindy caught me and drug me into her Sunday-school class. I didn't want to go at first——"

"I should say not!" pertly chimed in Elsa. She could understand that.

"And we gradually got to going together. I 'u'd meet her at Sunday-school, and she'd ask me home to dinner."

"Just like a hero in a movie," cut in the knowing child.

"She picks up too much," Dave told his wife with a serious shake of his head. "But as I was saying, Alindy Beach found me when I was a hoodlum and taught me a lot."

"But why did you marry our mamma, if you'd rather had that old Alindy?" questioned Elsa.

"Your ma—— Aw, well, I—er—wanted your ma most. Your ma, she had a way with her. And now don't ast me 'What way?' 'cause I ain't a wound-up dictionary."

"I like my mamma's way, too," agreed his little daughter with a sudden beaming smile.

"And I had to work to win your ma, which may have had something to do with my keeping after her," recalled Dave.

"Was papa different then?" asked Elsa, turning a serious face to her mother.

"Not much," returned Mrs. Flaxman. "Your papa weighed more and his hair was browner."

"I mean was he funnier?" pressed the observant child.

"Here, none of that!" corrected her father, half offended.

"Full of fun, I mean," explained Elsa, as if she found him rather tiresome. "I mean was he always such a solemn guy?"

"Where do you pick up slang?" testily demanded her father. "You never hear none to home. Chop it out, kid. I want you to talk straight American. Mame, why don't you take the trouble to make this kid use good language?"

"For the simple reason that I don't know very well, myself, how to talk," confessed his wife. "Married at seventeen and having worked as a hired girl five years before that—what time had I for education?" She sighed.

"Then you went to work when you were twelve," said Elsa.

"Listen to that, Mame!" shouted Dave Flaxman, delighted. "Not so slow! She's learned to substract. And now you see, kid, that your ma as well as your pa had a hard time when they was young, so you oughter be glad and thankful that you've got plenty of good food and warm clothes and a roof to cover you."

"I *hate* food and clothes and roofs that cover me!" exclaimed the child with sudden fury. "I want to play more!"

"Seven times eight?" gruffly inquired her father, to show her that the conversation, as far as she was concerned, was at an end.

"Don't that kid get the comicaled ideas?" Dave Flaxman good-naturedly asked his wife, after she had put Elsa to bed that evening.

"It's being so much with us. You keep her too close."

"Stop fussing, Mame. She's well off! Fat and sassy, with nothing to do but feed herself, study her lessons, and grow up."

"But she's getting more sullen every day."

"But when she's old enough to have sense, she'll thank her dad for fetching her up right."

"I don't know as she will, Dave. Sometimes children that are kept so close grow to hate their fathers."

"Aw, Mame, listen!"

"Dave, I *have* listened. But I never did agree with your way of bringing Elsa up. When I was her age, I thought about grown-ups and how they treated me—more than you'd think. You never was a little girl, Dave, so maybe you can't put yourself in Elsa's place," said his wife with a coaxing smile. "Elsa's such a little thing, Dave, that she don't stop to reason how well off she is. She just sulks when you keep her so close, and it's spoiling her disposition."

"Don't worry about that. I like her

scrappy and sulky. Leave her pout. She's well off." In their many arguments over the child, Dave was always returning to the statement that Elsa was well off, a wall against which his wife might beat the wings of her finer spirit without relief. "I know how to protect the kid, and I'm going to do it."

"I want to protect Elsa just as much as you do, but I mean to give her every little pleasure I can," firmly announced his wife.

The next morning, small Elsa Flaxman, after looking speculatively at her father at the breakfast table, spoke up in a serious, piping voice:

"Papa, I'm going to be ten years old this week."

"Ten, hey?" echoed Dave pleasantly, for he was enjoying his pancakes and maple sirup.

Emboldened by his apparent good humor, she continued:

"And, say, papa, can't I have a birthday party?"

"A birthday party! Mame, listen to that! Whatever put such nonsense into this kid's head?"

"The neighbors' children have parties, and sometimes she goes."

"Oh, please let me have a party, papa, please, *please!*" shrilly petitioned the child.

"Shut right up, if you ain't got nothing sensible to say," ordered her father.

"Then, papa, if I can't have a birthday party, I want to take dancing lessons," she stated in a resolute voice.

"Of all things! Never! What next? Ladies don't dance," he grimly affirmed.

"The children on the street take lessons from Miss Brownley," said Mame Flaxman evenly.

"Does *she* teach dancing? Well, maybe she does," allowed Flaxman. "Anyway, I always thought she was a mighty fine young woman. Why, her

father used to be considered the richest man in this town."

"But when he died, he didn't leave much money, after all. So Miss Brownley just has to do something. She would teach Elsa to be graceful and well-mannered. All the other children go there, and it makes her *feel so*—to be left out."

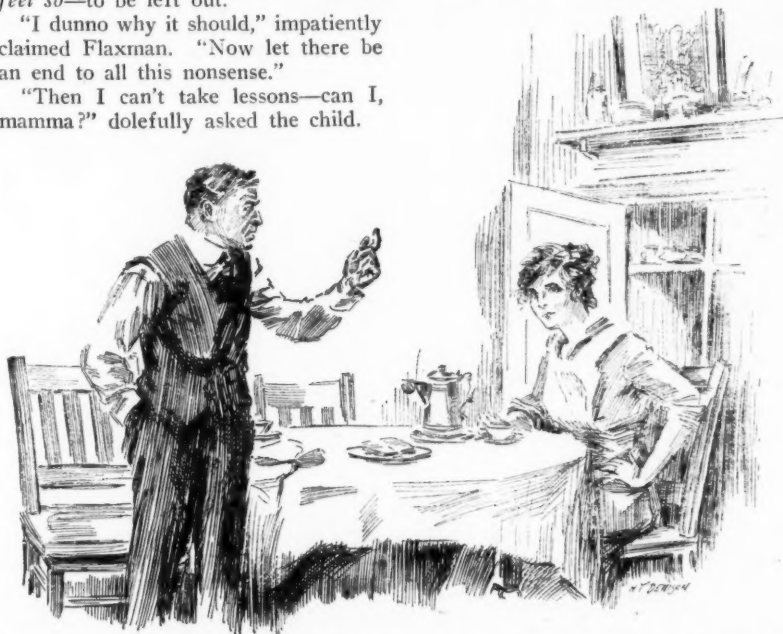
"I dunno why it should," impatiently claimed Flaxman. "Now let there be an end to all this nonsense."

"Then I can't take lessons—can I, mamma?" dolefully asked the child.

housekeeping bills, but he felt that he was in the right about Elsa.

"Where are you going?" he questioned his pouting little daughter, as she left the table, for he always kept a close watch over her when he was in the house.

"To study my 'rithmetic," she an-



"To—learn—to—dance!" slowly repeated Flaxman. "Why, dancing is one of the things I'm going to protect the kid from."

"No, dear, not unless your papa says you may."

"It's a wonder, Mama, that you'd give in that easy," said her husband with a note of approval in his voice.

"I have no money of my own," reminded his wife, with a somber look at the scowling child.

"You bet you ain't!" grinned Flaxman, not because he desired to keep money from his wife, for he was liberal in the matter of clothing and

answered and hurried toward the stairway.

"She's going up to her room to paint paper dolls till school time," enlightened his wife. "Your being so strict with Elsa is teaching her to lie."

"I could take that out of her," he threatened. "But what worries me most is—what if she just naturally goes wrong?"

"She's like you, Dave, strong-willed and stubborn, and wants her own way.

But she's generous, too. And if you were kinder to her, she would be anxious to please you. Sometimes she does the nicest things for me. Thinks of them all herself, too."

"I'm strong, all right, and firm. But I dunno, Mame, as you oughter say I like my own way in everything. I want the right way. But what I don't like about our kid's make-up is that she don't seem to think of nothing but a good time."

"She should have a good time, she only a child."

"But a good time just naturally leads to wanting nothing else but foolishness. That, and wrong associations, will be too much for her."

"The children she wants to play with, Dave, are from the best homes on the street. And I really do want her to learn to dance."

"To—learn—to—dance!" slowly repeated Flaxman. "Why, dancing is one of the things I'm going to protect the kid from. And so don't leave me hear no more about a birthday party. I'll put ten dollars in the bank for Elsa on her birthday, and add to it every year. How's that?" demanded Dave, expecting to be praised for his generosity.

"The money won't mean a thing to Elsa."

"I see I've got to discipline the kid—if she don't go wrong," grumbled Flaxman. "You'll never do it."

"Dave, I always shudder when you speak of her going wrong."

"She's liable to," he sighed. "But see here, Mame, if I didn't know what kind of a place the world really is, I wouldn't say so much about protecting the kid."

"Innocent pleasure in her own home is the greatest protection she can have now," claimed Mame Flaxman, "and I intend to give her a little party when she's ten years old." She looked straight at her husband.

"Not while I'm in this house," he heavily assured her.

"Then when you're out of the house," she added quietly.

"Which means you'll never do it—see!" He picked up his hat with great composure, for he was never more in his element than when laying down the law in his own home.

Mame Flaxman made no reply, though she was not afraid of her husband—and he knew it and secretly respected her courage. But she had feared him years before, and they had not arrived at their present state of humdrum prosperity without some domestic storms.

"I'm going on business to the city for supplies, and won't be home till the first of next week," he told her casually, as he took his light overcoat from the closet under the stairs, which was his usual way of announcing his trips.

A few days later, Flaxman, having finished his business sooner than he had expected, sat in the jarring, brightly lighted railway coach on his way home. He had been successful in buying, and was now looking forward to the sight of his comely, efficient wife and his sullen little daughter. That Elsa often regarded him with disapproval and even anger amused and pleased Dave Flaxman, who considered her dislike as a tribute to the strenuousness of his virtue.

Leaving the train, he walked briskly along the familiar streets; but as he stepped on the porch of his home, a strange sight met his bewildered gaze, and strange sounds came to him. At first he supposed he had been traveling so long that the glare of train lamps and the jangle of train bells were still with him. Then he stepped incredulously into the living room.

He had seen through the unshaded window the bobbing heads of a roomful of children in the parlor, and he now saw that the rug had been re-

moved and that a party of little children was dancing, while Miss Brownley played the piano.

Dave Flaxman's face was set like a mask, and he felt queer. The sight of so many dancing children, with rosy cheeks and bright eyes, affected him in a peculiar way. He tried to think that what he saw was wicked, but slowly a smile spread over his face. It was as if the innocent delight of his neighbors' boys and girls melted for a moment his armor of ignorant egotism.

All were upon the floor except Elsa, who sat soberly by the wall, like a wistful fairy in her white dress. And glancing from her to the others, Dave Flaxman understood now what Mame had meant when she had said that Elsa should play more and that it was not pleasant to be left out.

Dave dropped into a chair in the living room, where he could watch without being observed. And suddenly he caught a glimpse of his wife, prettily gowned in white, moving swiftly about in the dining room, preparing a luncheon for Elsa's guests. She was smiling as she worked, which angered Dave.

"Mame'll hear from me about this—when it's all over," he grimly decided. "But of course I can't say nothing before Miss Brownley and all these kids. I shan't give anybody a chance to blab of a row at Flaxman's." For in his fierce desire for respectability, he



His mouth was set in a grim line when he saw Elsa painfully trying to dance with a little boy, who was kind enough to attempt to teach her.

was always anxious to keep up appearances.

Still, angry as he now was, and bent on making his wife pay for Elsa's birthday party, he could not keep his eyes from the dancing children. And his mouth was set in a grim line when he saw Elsa painfully trying to dance with a little boy, who was kind enough to attempt to teach her. Finally Dave Flaxman's feet were keeping time, and he was startled by the cheerful voice of his wife saying diplomatically:

"Have some ice cream, Dave?"

"Don't care if I do," he politely accepted, for the benefit of any visiting child that might overhear them talking.

Mrs. Flaxman smilingly served her husband; but he could see that she was breathing quickly, and was not, perhaps, so unconcerned as she looked.

"I didn't suppose you'd be home till Monday morning," she explained, "or I wouldn't have had Elsa's party."

"Aw, chop out the regrets. We'll talk about the party—after it's over."

"As much as you please, Dave," she answered steadily, and passed into the parlor to serve the children, who were sitting about the wall with snowy napkins spread across their short laps.

But when Miss Brownley was gone, and the last child had piped its farewell, Dave Flaxman still sat in the large rocker, staring into the empty parlor. And Elsa, catching sight of her father for the first time that evening, regarded him with cold dismay.

"So, kid, you've been trying to dance," he said gruffly, and then paused, while Mame Flaxman could scarcely breathe and the clock ticked with harrowing regularity. "I saw you hopping round the parlor with Judge Granger's son. Where did you learn to dance that much?" he questioned, turning sternly to the child.

"I—I just picked it up," she replied.

"Then I must say you didn't pick up much."

"I taught her what I could, but the dances have changed since I was a girl," informed his wife evenly.

"If this kid's going to learn to dance, why not send her to Miss Brownley?" asked Dave in a harsh voice; for he was not used to conferring favors.

"Oh, papa, can I, can I?" cried the small girl, dancing about the room like a white butterfly.

"If your mother's willing," and Flaxman picked up the evening paper, as if that were the end of the affair as far as he was concerned.

And Mame Flaxman, victorious, but wise, said:

"Thank your papa for his consent."

"I thank you, papa, very much," said Elsa primly, though her feet could scarcely stand still in the small white slippers, and her very hair ribbon seemed to vibrate for joy.

"Aw, I'm willing, Mame," cried Flaxman heartily, throwing aside the paper, "of her dancing with the right folks in the right place. But honest—if you'd saw the dances I used to go to, you 'u'd know what made me so set against dancing for the kid. But to-night, when I saw the little tots hopping round so comical and happy, I got a different view of what it would mean for the kid."

"Did you have a good trip, Dave?" asked his wife.

"Fine. And say, I saw Alindy Beach. But she's Alindy Adlake now—married a blind musician that plays the church organ. And he can't see her, which ain't no loss, 'cause time ain't plumped her out the way it has you, Mame."

"I hope you told her how often you remembered her," smiled Mrs. Flaxman. "We were speaking of her not long ago."

"Never thought of it. She's got three kids—boys—pretty nigh tore the train to pieces! I had to get up and change my seat. I couldn't stand their clatter. Oh, yes, she says, 'Remember me to dear Mamie,' so I have. I guess I kind of gilded her memory, though. But she's a well-meaning woman."

Elsa Flaxman's small rosy face was still glowing with gratitude. She seated herself at the table, opened her worn arithmetic, and asked:

"Papa, what's 'leven times twelve? The bottom of this page is torn. And I'm learning the 'levens now."

"'Leven times twelve is one hundred and thirty-two. But you'd better not tackle the 'levens, kid, till to-morrow, 'cause it's long past your bedtime now," her father said gently, and smiled at his wife over the child's golden head.

Mr Foster Horns In

THE ECHO
NEWS

EDUCATION

NOTICE

By
HOLMAN
F.
DAY



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

Cap'n Sproul has the management of the Scotaze newspaper suddenly thrust upon him—and the story is one of the funniest in which the cap'n ever figured.

MR. OZRO FOSTER footed it into Scotaze from over the hills—and from far away, too. From very far away! Because nobody in Scotaze had ever seen him before. And he had never laid eyes on Scotaze until he trudged over the last hill. He said as much to a six-toed coon cat who rode comfortably under his left arm; under his right arm was a small duffel bag of dirty canvas; the top of a tin flute stuck out of his coat pocket. Mr. Foster was traveling light and manifestly was with congenial company.

"Horace Greeley," said he to the cat, "my dear old scout, yon lies a hamlet which is pleasingly withdrawn from the clamors and the distractions of the metropolis. The curling smoke from the chimneys indicates warmth and comfort—indicates possibilities of food for me and of a cozy corner for you. The December air is rasping; the frost-bound earth hurts my feet; yon slaty

bank of clouds hints at drifting snow. If there's a printing office here, what say? Let's go into winter quarters!"

"Pr-a-o-u-w, ma-o-u-w!" assented the six-toed cat amiably.

"All right, Horace! Milk and cream must be fresh and plentiful here, and I relish country pork and homemade pies. Near the source—near the source! That's the secret of plenty and contentment for folks who are foot-loose in this world. Nothing like being foot-loose!

"I would not choose it as my lot
To be a stone to mark a spot.
Nor squat contented in one hole.
I'd rather roll—I'd rather roll."

Mr. Foster sang that with a voice a bit cracked, for he was an elderly man, but he sang it with gusto, and so came into the heart of the village of Scotaze.

"Wr-a-o-u-w!" remarked the cat with much vigor, wriggling in the hook of his master's arm.

"Yes, I smelled it just as soon as you did, Horace. Printer's ink! Where — Oh, there it is! *Scotaze Echo*, says the sign, and an echo is only an imitation of the real thing. However, let's hope for the best."

He marched into the little low building that housed the newspaper.

The front office was narrow and bare. Behind the sheathed partition that fenced off the rear of the premises, a printing press grumbled away slowly, shaking the dirty windows in the partition. A man who wore a plug hat, a white necktie, and a black frock coat was cleaning papers out of a desk; he was just stuffing the last ones into a cloth bag. He did not pay any attention to Mr. Foster.

"Excuse me, elder, but can you tell me where the boss is?" inquired the visitor, after a respectful wait.

The man at the desk did not turn his head.

"There is no such person here."

"But when will he be back?"

"It may be stated truthfully that such a person does not exist. It may be said of the position, '*Non est*.'"

"Exactly! Then it may also be said, '*De nihilo nihilum, in nihilum nil posse reverti*,'" declared Mr. Foster genially.

The other man whirled around and stared with frank amazement.

"Understand, of course?"

"No, I——" faltered the clerical gentleman.

"That's too bad," said Mr. Foster, setting "Horace Greeley" on the floor. "I was hoping I'd found somebody to chew a little Latin with me. The idea I was conveying was that if there is no such person as a boss for this place, then it wouldn't be much use for me to wait around till the boss got back."

"You may wait, if your time is not too valuable. Probably somebody will show up to take charge of the property. I have been in charge. I am now departing." He shoved in the last of

the papers, leaving the desk bare. "Doubtless somebody will arrive to take charge. I am now going to report to parties who may desire to assume the responsibilities." He stalked out.

Mr. Foster stared after him and then caught the gaze of Horace Greeley, who had stopped smoothing down his rumpled hair in order to look up at his master.

"I feel just the way you do about this thing, Horace," confided Mr. Foster. "The echo seems to be growing faint. Ordinarily, I wouldn't be hanging around a place where there is not any boss. But I reckon I'll stay here for a time and see what happens."

He wrenched a hearty mouthful off a plug of tobacco, pulled a rumpled newspaper out of a pile of exchanges, and began to read. The rumble of a press was in his ears, the scent of ink in his nose, and he and the couchant cat appeared to be very comfortable indeed.

The gentleman who had retreated from responsibility turned in at the gate when he had reached the residence of Cap'n Aaron Sproul. When admitted, he sat down in the parlor, rested limp hands across his lap, and surveyed the cap'n with lusterless pale-blue eyes.

"I am weary—quite weary, sir. I've come here to tell you to take it. You may take it. I must insist that you take it."

"You'd better take it yourself—whatever it is you're talking about. If it's medicine, you seem to need it."

"Of course you must understand what I am talking about?"

"I have not the least idea, Elder Jackins."

"I had hoped that the paper would afford to me soothing and refreshing mental employment after my strenuous toil in the pulpit, sir."

The pale eyes solicited sympathy from the cap'n, but the cap'n's impassivity did not melt. He knew that

Elder Jackins, a lay preacher, had boarded with relatives, free, and had lived on tolerant friends for six months and had preached about six sermons in that time, supplying pulpits.

"But I have found no relief in journalism. I am what you see me—a nervous wreck on account of my exacting duties."

The cap'n scowled.

"I am weary—weary! I must hie away and recuperate."

"I ain't doing anything to prevent that, elder." The cap'n pressed his elbow against his wallet and held it close. He was certain that the tired gentleman had come to solicit a loan. He knew that Elder Jackins had no money; it had been an unexplained mystery how he had raised the funds to buy the local newspaper, even though the decrepit equipment and the run-down business had not required much money. "I ain't hendering you from a-roving and a-rambling. Go ahead!"

To his relieved astonishment, the elder rose and started for the door.

"Thank you, sir, for taking from me all responsibility. The paper is being printed. I have attended to the duties of the office for this week—much as my poor brain has been agonized by the effort."

"Just one minute!" If the elder did not want to borrow money, the cap'n was willing to keep him on the premises until a certain opinion had been registered. "If editing the kind of a paper that you have been handing out to us who have paid our good money for it has given you brain fag, then your brain better be put to bed and fed spoon vittles."

The elder displayed prompt resentment.

"It's little you know about the tortures of brain workers, sir."

"Don't claim to know!"

"You cannot gaze into this furnace of raging thoughts," declared Mr. Jack-

ins, flapping thin fingers against his brow.

"No, nor I don't want to! But I have looked into that printing office a few times, and I have looked into the paper after it has been printed. All but two columns has been stuff that has come in strips in a box, and old Solon Wing has sawed it up to make it fit. The two columns has been items that folks have lugged in and handed to you. You have worn out pants cloth instead of brains, while you've been running that paper."

The elder was safely at the door.

"You are a very coarse man, sir. You are like a lot of others—you think you can run that newspaper better than I have."

"I don't intend to try it. I——"

"You'll have a chance to try it. I say again, you take it."

"I'd rather take the smallpox. What in blazes are you talking about? What are you here gabbling riddles to me for?"

"It's your money that bought the paper. I am weary. I give it up."

"My money! Why, you old plug-hatted lead pencil, I never put any money into that confounded sin spout!"

"Then it's plain that you'd better be on a little better terms with your own wife. But perhaps she doesn't like to trust you with anything important."

Leaving that shaft to rankle, Elder Jackins departed with considerable haste. The cap'n shouted and ran after him, but when the elder reached the gate, he put on more speed and escaped.

The cap'n's wife was at the door when he returned from the chase.

"What did he want, Aaron?" she quavered. Her eyes shifted under his angry stare and she exhibited much discomposure.

"He didn't seem to want anything. He seems to be around playing Santy Claus. He hove a newspaper plant at



Mr. Wing was sitting up and appeared to be having trouble with the back of his head.

me and run away before I could plaster it back onto him."

"I—I don't understand, Aaron."

"Nor I. But if I don't understand pretty mighty soon—seeing that he has brought you into it—I'll go into the house and turn that 'God Bless Our Home' motto to the wall and make a few remarks. What does he mean by my putting my money into his newspaper—owning it?"

"It wasn't your money."

"Then it *was* money, was it?"

"Yes, my own money, my own timberland money."

"You have a right to do just as you want to with your money, Louada Murilla. But if this is a fair sample of your investments—backing an old, wilted dangswillow of that kind—I'll

have you put under guardianship as feeble-minded!"

"It wasn't just to back him. But he seemed to be a good, honest man, needing employment and——"

"Employment! Ain't you any better judge of human nature than to think that angleworm wanted to work?"

"I had reasons of my own for wanting to control a paper, Aaron." Red was in her cheeks.

"What be ye—going to run for Congress?" he inquired acridly. "Control a newspaper! What the devil is the matter with the women these days? Control a—— Look here, Louada Murilla, this is the first serious thing that has come between us. You're having secrets from me. What does it mean?"

Tears came into her eyes. His anger was overwhelming her.

"Oh, Aaron, you don't understand! It was going to be a surprise for you. I have worked so hard. It's only because I love you so much. I wanted to spend my money to make you happy."

"But what made you think I'd do hornpipes and give three cheers of joy because you owned that bungdown newspaper?"

"They wouldn't print it in the county paper. The editor was stingy. I wanted to have an editor who'd have to do just as I said, so that I could have it printed." She sobbed.

"What printed?"

"The story of your life. I've been working at it when you didn't know. I've taken down notes of your stories. I was going to have it come out serially in the paper, and then have it printed in book form. I'd give every cent of my own to please you, Aaron! I have meant it all in the best spirit. I have, Aaron!" She broke down and cried frankly.

The anger melted out of his face. Her devotion touched him. He went to her, put his arm about her, and led her into the house.

"It's all right! Don't cry! But you ought to have told me about the business part. I'm afraid you have let that elder hornswoggle ye. Howsomever, we'll make the best of it, Louada Murilla. I know you meant all right. Don't cry any more! We'll straighten it out."

"You'll take hold of the paper, now that he has run away, won't you?" she implored.

"I'd rather take a-holt of the tail of a royal Peruvian tiger."

"But you're not going to see me lose the money I have put in! I don't know anything about business. I'm sure you'll be willing to help, now that you understand. Please, Aaron!"

"Let's sit down and have a peep at what you've got writ up," he said, his tone hinting that he was at least half persuaded.

She brought to him a thick packet of manuscript, smiling through happier tears. He took it and hefted it in his hands.

"My gracious, I didn't know I was of so much account in the world to have all that writ about me!"

"You're of more account to me than all the other men who have lived, Aaron."

He pulled her down on his knees and kissed her.

"Let's see!" He adjusted his spectacles and read aloud from the title page, penned in her best hand and decorated with old-fashioned scrolls of ornate penmanship birds and ribbons: "From Shore to Shore. The Life Story of Captain Aaron Sproul, Gallant Master Mariner, Written by his Loving Wife. Starts off in shipshape style!"

"I do hope you're going to like it."

"I can't help liking what you have done, wife." He began to read. "It is the proud boast of Captain Aaron Sproul that at fifteen years of age he moved on board a ship with his trunk and went downstairs——' Say, look here, Louada Murilla, if anybody else than you proposed to print that as a proud boast of mine, I'd—I'd——"

"But you did say it, Aaron!"

"Never! Never said no such thing—not unless I have spells of raving when I don't know what I say."

"But my notes——"

"What I said was that at fifteen I hove my dunnage bag over the rail and was kicked below into the fo'c's'le. If you put in that other lingo, it'll be said that I never even waded across a cove at low water."

"I'm afraid you're not going to like my story, after all the work I've put on it," she whimpered.

Again irritation departed from him promptly.

"Don't you worry a mite. I shall like it," he assured her. "It's all in there—I'm sure you've got it all in. But it may be cluttered up a leetle speck, like stuff that's been hove into the lazareet. Lines need to be recoiled and so forth and so on. I'll help ye to do it, Louada Murilla. We'll go over it together."

"Let's start in 'right now," she invited with eagerness.

But he gently put her off his knees.

"I can't settle my mind to it just yet," he said. "Remember that there's a newspaper of yours——"

"Say 'ours'—please do, dear!"

"Well, ours, then! It's walloping around loose downtown like a mains'l half blowed out of the bolt ropes. I'd better go down and snug ship."

"You're my own dear husband—my help in time of trouble!" She kissed him.

"Of course the sensible thing to do, Louada Murilla, so as to save all trouble, would be to put dynamite under it and blow it seventeen ways for Sunday. Oh, hold on, hold on! I know! This has got to be attended to." He patted the bunch of manuscript. "We'll tend to it, no matter what resks we run."

"The paper can't be allowed to stop, Aaron."

"Oh, it'll run on by itself as well as that mildewed old cabbage toad handled it! Solon Wing can keep on sawing up them strips, and his fuzzy dog can set in the office chair and take in what items are fetched. He'll make a better editor than that condemned elder."

He meditated for a time and scratched the side of his head.

"But of course there's got to be some editing done," he growled. "And I haven't ever pretended to be much of a journalist."

By the way she looked at him, it was

manifest that she had something on her mind.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded.

"I have been thinking of putting Elder Jackins out. That's why I haven't said anything cross about his leaving. I'm glad he's gone. I have had somebody else in mind."

"Who?"

"Cousin Calista Widd," she said after a moment's hesitation.

"Say! She ain't more'n half bright!"

"Why, Aaron Sproul! It isn't right for you to hint that about a literary woman like Cousin Calista Widd!"

"Well, look what she is doing! She has got her old mother to eating nuts and dried beans and raw corn, just as if she was a sheep!"

"That's the new food régime. Aunt Roxy is ever so much better than she used to be."

"Mebbe that's because she's getting nearer to the day when she'll be an angel. She can't gum that hoss feed much longer and stay alive. No, I don't take much stock in Calista Widd. What's all this new notion of hers? Something about a man's name not fitting him?"

"Why, it's the new science of numerology. Every letter in a man's or a woman's name stands for a certain number and can be reduced to vibrations and——"

"There! That's enough! It's just as I told ye—she ain't in her right mind. She'd be editing some of that kind of sculch into the paper."

Mrs. Sproul rose to assert a few of her own rights.

"Aaron, there are a great many new things in this world that are coming along to help humanity. I think it will be a grand thing to have Cousin Calista explain some of those new things to the people—to devote a column or so to the subject. I believe she will bring brains and ability to the paper."

"Go ahead and put her in. I ain't

any candidate to be editor. Furthermore, being an old maid, she ought to know more or less spicy gossip to ginger up the news with."

"I do wish you wouldn't treat Cousin Calista so lightly, Aaron."

"Furthermore, seeing that for twenty years or more she and old Solon Wing have been planning to get married, putting her into that newspaper office ought to start something." He went into the hall and took down his hat. "I'll go down now and see if old Solon has woken up enough to know that the paper is running itself."

At that moment, in the *Echo* establishment, Mr. Wing was very much awake.

Whether he had been wholly awake while feeding the broad sheets one by one into the torpid old printing press might have been questioned by an onlooker. In fact, a certain onlooker did question it. The latter was Mr. Foster, who had become tired of waiting and had decided to have a peep at the interior of the office. The peep showed to him a grizzled and gaunt veteran of the old school, who stood on the platform beside the press pushing the sheets down toward the clutching fingers. He, like Elder Jackins, wore a frock coat and a venerable stovepipe headgear.

"They must think blamed well of journalism in this town, seeing that they have to wear plug hats while attending to the job," muttered the visitor.

A wheezy steam engine furnished power for the press, and the glow from a fire box invited Horace Greeley. He passed between the feet of Mr. Foster and started for the fire; and promptly arose an old, fuzzy cocker spaniel to guard his own domain. He came forward with a growl. With much zest, the six-toed cat leaped on him and secured a generous souvenir of hair—a clump for each toe. The dog howled

and ran into a corner; Horace calmly appropriated the nest of bagging near the fire.

The lament of the dog diverted Mr. Solon Wing's attention from his job; he snapped his head around—and missed a sheet. That error seemed to act upon him like a kind of galvanic shock. He yanked a lever to throw off the driving belt; he leaped down from the platform and dashed around the press, grabbing at the flywheel in order to stop the machinery. But the zinc floor was slippery on account of the steam in the room, and his feet went up into the air, and he banged down on his back and slid for several yards.

Mr. Foster obligingly stopped the flywheel, but noted that he was too late to prevent an "offset"—that is to say, the type had smeared its fresh ink on the packing of the cylinder. Mr. Wing was sitting up and appeared to be having trouble with the back of his head. Therefore, Mr. Foster secured a few printed papers, which he recognized as "wipe sheets," mounted the platform, threw the lever, and fed the sheets through. Then he stopped the press.

Mr. Wing had got on his feet again and was cursing shrilly.

"Your remarks are justified," said Mr. Foster politely. "An old-fashioned Potter without a throw-off is a devil, especially in cold weather when there's so much electricity to stick the sheets together. Talk up to it, professor!"

"I'm talking to *you*! What are you doing here? What do you mean by coming in here and setting that wildcat onto 'Ben Franklin'?"

"Ben Franklin, hey? Well, Ben Franklin needs to have his manners doctored up a little, and Horace Greeley is just the boy who can give him a lesson in politeness."

"Get out of here, the two of you!"

"And you don't seem to be much improvement over Ben in the way of man-

ners. I have just done you a neighborly and professional kindness. Your press is all ready. If you haven't got over your tumble, I'll spell you a while. I have fed Potters in my day."

"Come down off that platform. I'll run my own business!"

"Go ahead, then," agreed Mr. Foster, descending from the platform. "Go right ahead! I'll sit here in hopes you'll miss another sheet. If Pro Bono Publico, Constant Reader, and Justitia happen to drop in, we may be able to get a little innocent entertainment."

"Look here," said Mr. Wing with truculence. "I don't know who you are, but——"

"My name is Foster, elder."

"Don't you 'elder' me! And I don't know what you are, but——"

"Command me as brother and fellow in the art preservative. I have stuck type from Lubec to the Rio Grande, chronicling everything from the size of a codfish catch to the hanging of a Bowie County horse thief. I have ——"

"You're a devilish tramp printer, that's what you are!"

"And therefore crammed with knowledge of the wide world, fortified by the philosophy of one who has seen all things and has rubbed against all men! You poor turnip, I pity you. Go on feeding forth this palladium to a waiting world. And in the meantime, I'll see what it is they are waiting for."

He lifted a sheet from the table in the rear of the press, folded it, climbed upon a stool near a window, and proceeded to inspect the current issue of the *Scotaze Echo*.

This cool temerity intimidated Mr. Wing; he divided scowls between cat and master and then went on with his labors.

"Two columns of set matter and the rest plate!" remarked Mr. Foster. "And as for make-up and appearance, I could do as well with a cheese press

and a peck of shoe pegs. Set matter consists of notices for church meetings, who went to the shire town last week, and 'fatal' accident. "Let's see! 'Automobile dropped through a bridge on the Ridge Road and two were drowned, but we did not learn their names.'"

He dropped the paper to the floor.

"That chap in the plug hat must have been called somewhere to take a big job as puzzle editor. He certainly can keep 'em guessing."

The fuzzy dog was in his corner, glowering. Mr. Wing occasionally found time to snatch his gaze from his work and glower, too.

Horace Greeley crouched before the fire box with paws cozily folded and eyelids drooping in excess of comfort.

Mr. Foster pulled out his tin flute and polished it on his coat sleeve. Then he began to pipe that tried and true old melody "Home Again from a Foreign Shore." He timed the tune as best he could to the bangings of the ancient press.

"Hey, you!" shrilled Mr. Wing above the clatter. "I don't like that."

Mr. Foster took the flute from his lips for an instant.

"That's immaterial, professor! I'm simply trying to suit Horace and myself." He went on with his music.

Then upon the scene came Cap'n Aaron Sproul. He put up his hand to signal Mr. Wing and shouted with such sharpness in his tone that again the old printer missed a sheet and, in his anxiety to prevent wasting paper, repeated his high dive, slide, and fall. His plug hat rolled to a far corner.

"It's plain to me now how he lost his hair," remarked Mr. Foster to the astonished cap'n. "He must have worn it off against this zinc floor." He pulled off his broad-brimmed hat, disclosing a head as bald as Mr. Wing's. "I ran out from under my hair, chasing delinquent subscribers."

The cap'n surveyed the stranger



"Just a minute, you folks," broke in the cap'n brusquely. "I am not here as chairman of any natural-history convention."

without especial interest; he turned to Mr. Wing.

"I have only called in, Wing, to tell you that I'm going to skipper this shebang till other arrangements are made. When you have time, you can report to me on the quarter-deck. And I'll say right here, at the start-off, that there's not a bit of need of flying around like that, trying to make a boy of yourself at your age."

He went back into the office, and Mr. Foster promptly followed, with his copy of the *Echo* in his hand.

"Change in management?" he inquired pleasantly.

"Yes," admitted the cap'n, with reserve.

"Needs it! Look at this for a newspaper!" He shook the sheet.

"Do you claim that you know something about what a newspaper should be?"

"Forty years at the case, mixed in with editing and reporting."

The press was still, and Mr. Wing entered.

"What's the matter with this office,

Wing, that we can't get but two columns of home news in a week?"

"I don't have any help to set the type. I can't do everything."

"Need help, hey?"

"Yes, if there's going to be more type set."

"There's going to be—a lot of it. Want a job?" he asked Mr. Foster.

"Sure thing! I'm an all-round man. I'll settle here for the winter, give me twelve a week."

"You're signed on. If you ain't A 1 and able, then over the side you go."

"I'm not going to work with that man," declared Mr. Wing.

"What in blazes have you got to say about your fo'c's'le mates?" barked Cap'n Sproul.

"Nobody knows who he is. He has just tramped in here."

"Do you suppose I bothered to ask for pedigrees when I shanghaied crews for the *Jefferson P. Benn*?"

"But this is no ship, and I don't have to stay unless I want to."

"It's lucky for you it isn't a ship! Else I'd keelhaul you for mutiny. All right, go! Although, seeing that I'm going to put Miss Calista Widd in here for editor, I figured that you'd be staying. However, this man here—What's your name?"

"Ozro Foster, of the world at large."

"I say, Wing, this man here, maybe, will take orders from her just as smart and willing as you'd take 'em."

"It's pretty tough to be discharged after all the years I have—"

"I haven't discharged you. But I'm coaxing no man to stay if he wants to go."

"I'll stay." Mr. Wing's countenance was exhibiting various emotions.

Cap'n Sproul surveyed the two men for some time, scratching his ear. Wing and Foster were bristling at each other; Horace Greeley came stalking out into the office and Ben Franklin

followed sullenly at a respectful distance.

"Now that we are about to up killick," stated the cap'n, finishing his meditations, "I want you to understand just how you are signed on for the cruise. I'm skipper, Miss Widd is pilot, Wing is first mate, and Foster goes second mate."

The two men looked a little dubious. Their faces cleared when the cap'n added:

"I shall sign on a couple of hands before the mast so that neither of you will have to do any swab work. If more of a crew is needed, I'll have 'em. I don't want any more of that lead junk for cargo. Set it all up in our own type."

"We'll show 'em what a newspaper is," declared Mr. Foster. "Who did you say is going to be editor?"

Mr. Wing cracked his knuckles and looked self-conscious.

His emotion increased promptly.

At that moment a plump and pleasing personality bustled into the office. Though of middle age, Miss Calista Widd possessed charms.

"Cousin Lou told me I'd better hurry right down," she told the cap'n. "I do hope you haven't changed your mind in regard to me, Cousin Aaron."

"I have just signed you on," stated the cap'n. "Meet the second mate, man by the name o' Foster. The first mate you don't need to be introduced to, as I understand it."

There was a touch of sarcasm in his tone. Mr. Wing looked more distressed and Miss Widd blushed.

The cat helped her to relieve the situation. She turned and found the animal staring up at her with big yellow eyes, its mass of hair fluffed by the electric chill of winter.

"My sakes, what a lovely, elegant cat!" cried Miss Widd, with real spinner's admiration for the species.

"His name is Horace Greeley," prof-

ferred Mr. Foster, "and he has six toes on each foot. He has been my traveling companion and chief friend for going on ten years. He knows more than a good many men I have met."

She knelt down and stroked the head of the appreciative Horace. He blinked and began to purr with a vehemence that suggested an active coffee mill.

"It isn't often he takes to folks so suddenly," stated Mr. Foster. "Folks have to have special qualities to make him take to 'em on short acquaintance. That is why I say he knows so much more than many men. He has insight into character."

Miss Widd looked up at Mr. Foster with frank friendliness.

"Can he do tricks?"

"No, ma'am, I won't let him. He and I don't consider it would be dignified for a cat of his character."

"I envy you for owning him. I have always been crazy for a long-haired cat like this. Of course you would not think of——"

"No, ma'am, I would not sell him—no, nor give him away. It has always been my little joke that the one who takes Horace will have to take me, too."

Mr. Wing was plainly finding this conversation irritating.

"I never had any use for a cussed, deceitful, sneaking cat." He pointed to the dog, who sat in a corner with drooping jowls, sagging ears, and mournful countenance. "There's the friend to have! When Ben Franklin takes a notion to anybody, that person comes mighty nigh being all right. And when he sits in a corner and has that expression on his face, he's got good reason for it."

The dog began to dig himself with his hind foot, whining at the same time.

"He seems to have something else, too," observed Mr. Foster. "Most

dogs do have 'em—and dirty paws to wipe on the carpet. Give me a cat."

"This is certainly the loveliest pussy I ever saw," said Miss Widd with fresh enthusiasm.

"There's this about a dog——" began Mr. Wing.

"Just a minute, you folks," broke in the cap'n brusquely. "I am not here as chairman of any natural-history convention. You are starting right now under pay, working for me, and I suggest you get to work. Wing, where's the book with the subscribers' names?"

Mr. Wing extracted it from the safe and placed it in the cap'n's hands.

"Have they been paying up prompt?"

"No, sir. You'll see by the dates after the names. Mr. Jackins had a piece in the paper every week asking them to settle, but they didn't pay much attention."

Cap'n Sproul put the book under his arm and started for the door.

"I reckon there are some features of journalism that I'm going to relish, myself," he vouchsafed, slamming the door behind him.

They looked out of the window and saw him holding the open book under the nose of an apprehensive citizen, tapping stubby forefinger on the page.

No longer hampered by espionage, the fuzzy dog, who had been stirred by surly jealousy while observing the attentions which Miss Widd lavished on the cat, made a rush at the intruder. It was a sudden and savage assault, but Horace Greeley had been made wary by too many vicissitudes in his wanderings to become the victim of a fat dog in a country printing office. He rose into the air like a puff ball, came down like a swooping hawk, flattened himself on Ben Franklin's back, with claws deep set into fur and hide, and rode that distracted and clamorous canine around and around the little office until Mr. Foster plucked his pet off by lucky

arm thrust and set the growling Horace on his shoulder, safe from harm.

"Poor kitty! That naughty dog shan't plague you!" cried Miss Widd, full of solicitude.

"Poor kitty!" snarled Mr. Wing, now fully as jealous as Ben Franklin. "Do you mean to say you're taking the side of that haired-up hellion against Ben——"

"Solon Wing! Mind your tongue!"

"That's twice that catamount has clawed my poor, innocent dog. This is my dog's own home. He has got a right to be here. As to others, they have dropped from where nobody knows, and they are here to abuse and browbeat their betters. And folks from whom I expected different things are petting 'em and taking their side."

"Solon, are you losing your mind?" demanded Miss Widd. "How dare you insult me in any such manner?"

"I have not been admitted to this lady's confidence. I regret to say that I am a stranger. But I will not stand idly by and see an insult offered to her," declared Mr. Foster with firmness.

"Thank you," said the lady. "Now I must ask both of you to go to your own work. I have important writing to do. Mr. Foster, if you wish, you may leave pussy with me. I will make up a bed on the desk where the dear thing won't be annoyed by that naughty old dog."

Mr. Foster handed over the amenable Horace and followed Mr. Wing into the rear room. That gentleman slammed the door behind them and faced the interloper with a veritable frenzy of passion; he writhed and stutted in attempt to control himself.

"You need to be set where you belong and I'm going to set you there! Talk to me, will ye, about protecting that lady from insult—to *me*? I'm the one to protect her! I'm engaged to her! Now you see where you belong, don't you?"

"How long have you been engaged?"

"More than twenty years," said Mr. Wing, proudly displaying right of proprietorship.

"Looks to me like your claim on her had been outlawed long ago," stated Mr. Foster. "What are you waiting for?"

"That's none of your business. You mind your eye after this, and when you find a boarding place, you keep that cat there. I won't have it around this office."

"I reckon she's going to find Horace an inspiration for her brain work. If that's the case, he stays." There was calm finality in Mr. Foster's tone and a hard light in his gray eyes.

"There's a pied galley over on that bank. You go distribute it," commanded "the first mate."

"If you give off any more orders to me, I'll tell you where *you* can go—and you can leave your earlappers behind."

Mr. Wing worked his jaws and writhed again; he was speechless.

"Just understand this," pursued Mr. Foster. "When it comes to all-round knowledge of a printing office, you are about as big, compared with me, as one of your Ben Franklin's fleas is alongside an elephant. You go along with your work as you see it set before you. I'm going to take account of stock, to see what we need in this place so as to make a newspaper. You have let everything run to loose ends."

He went back into the office and asked Miss Widd politely for blank paper.

"Do I understand that the lord high admiral now in command has means?" he inquired confidentially.

"Oh, yes! He's real rich."

"That knowledge will be used by me to flavor estimates, Miss Widd. Of course, you and I are of the same mind. We want to make a big success of our paper."



"It's time to have some sensible reading matter in this paper. And I don't like the name of the paper, anyhow. I wouldn't call a mud scow 'Echo'."

"Oh, I am so glad that you're progressive and enthusiastic!"

"Make use of my experience as you see fit."

"Then you have had much experience?"

"I know the game from type louse to managing editor, Miss Widd. I have toured widely in order to obtain that knowledge. I am also collecting sociological data for use in my book."

"Oh, you are writing a book?" She swung around and exhibited fresh interest.

"I am crystallizing my knowledge of the wide world in words, madam. You must not judge me by mere looks or because I seem to be a lonely wanderer."

"Oh, I know that philosophers go forth to search the world for information." She gazed at him as Desdemona probably looked on Othello at their first meeting.

"You are most discerning, Miss Widd. I believe we shall be mutually helpful. I have been misjudged so much! You can imagine how my feelings were injured when that angular person in the back room called me a tramp printer."

"Did Solon Wing dare to call you that?"

"Aye, of a surety! He will probably undertake to prejudice you by similar talk."

"I won't listen to it."

"Oh, it will do no harm to listen, now that I have given you more accurate information."

He bowed and retired.

"Professor, bump against that!" he chuckled.

"It must have been wonderful to travel about the wide world with your master," murmured Miss Widd, addressing the purring cat. "I have so many questions to ask him!"

The truth of that remark was borne out by Miss Widd's activities during the next few days.

With a green face and glittering eyes, Mr. Wing drew Cap'n Sproul aside at last.

"I can't stand it any longer. I ain't called upon to stand it. It's one continual buzz—buzz—buzz between 'em. I don't believe it's all business they're talking. I've got claims on her that he ain't got."

"Go ahead and foreclose your claims," advised the cap'n bluntly. "I haven't got any sympathy with this dillydallying in love matters, Wing. You ought to have her pretty well courted by this time. Gab and broken candy Sunday afternoons—gab and a bag of Tallman sweetings Wednesday evenings—I know your system. A woman can't put up with that program forever!"

"But she hasn't been in any stew to get married. She's had her mother."

"And my Louada Murilla had her brother. But I grabbed her and married her inside of the first week I knew her—and she was mighty grateful after the shock was over. Now, Wing, don't bother me with your whining. That Foster man is setting up type twice as fast as you be, and Calista is getting good ideas from him; I know it because she has handed me some of her pieces to read. Get your mind onto your business. We've got to be journalists. I'm in it all over and am enjoying it. Blast 'em, they're paying their subscriptions. There are a few who still owe, but I'm going out and tip 'em upside down and rap their heads on the ground till I jounce the money out of their pockets."

The cap'n found Mr. Foster submitting proof slips to Miss Widd.

"I reckon our first issue is going to be a hummer, mate," declared the cap'n genially.

"It certainly is, sir. I'm doing a lit-

tle writing for it, myself. Miss Widd approves."

The cap'n drew a clipping from his wallet.

"Slap that in. It's ship news I cut out of my paper."

"But up here so far from the sea, Cousin Aaron—the folks don't know — They—" faltered Miss Widd.

"It's time for 'em to know. It's time to have some sensible reading matter in this paper. And I don't like the name of the paper, anyhow. I wouldn't call a mud scow '*Echo*.'"

"I have felt that the name was very weak," agreed Mr. Foster.

"Call her '*The Clipper*,'" suggested the cap'n."

"Might not that name suggest that we are using the shears instead of the pen?" inquired Mr. Foster meekly.

"Guess you're right! Reckon you know more about names than I do—it's your business."

"I have devised a name by numeralogy—so that the vibrations insure success," ventured Miss Widd.

The cap'n scowled.

"I would call it '*The Pabulum*.'"

"Would, hey?"

"It means food—food for thought—food——"

"Look here, Miss Widd, if that provender you're feeding to your mother is any criterion to go by, you're a mighty poor judge of food. We'll have less vibrating and more common sense!"

The speech was rude and the situation was uncomfortable. Mr. Foster's tact smoothed things for all.

"Suppose I take the matter in hand? I'll give you a good, lively name and keep it for a surprise. I'd like to keep a few other matters in the first issue for a surprise."

The cap'n squinted at him doubtfully.

"I ain't very well acquainted with you, Foster. I never take many chances with a man I don't know. Your sur-

prise might bring on a libel suit or something of the kind."

"I have been in the newspaper business too long to make mistakes of that sort, sir. My little surprises are not yet exactly clear in my own mind—else I would explain them now. But I assure you they will be innocent and will sell many papers."

"Then go ahead. You slap in the kind of spice that will sell papers and I'll stand behind you."

"That is good enough for *me*," declared Mr. Foster.

Again did Mr. Wing seek private conference, some days later, with Cap'n Sproul. His eyes were round; his voice was hushed; mystery surrounded him; and the quaver of mingled rage and jealousy was in his tones.

"That tramp, that fly-by-night, is trying to gull and deceive you, Cap'n Sproul. I have caught him hiding things away—locking up type he has set. He has got all his stuff under lock and key. He is planning mischief, I tell ye!"

"I know all about it," stated the cap'n with serenity, remembering the conversation in regard to the "surprises."

"You needn't peek and peer and bother with the affairs of my second mate. I stand behind him."

"Well, do you stand behind him in this?" squealed Mr. Wing. He plucked a paper from his pocket with trembling hand; he unfolded the printed sheet. It was headed: "Wanted For Arson, Burglary, and Highway Robbery." There followed an excellent description of Mr. Foster, with mention of the cat and the tin flute to aid in identification.

"That's the kind of a critter you're harboring and condoning! He's the scalawag you're standing up for! He's a burglar and everything else. He's roving around to see where he can play his tricks! He's——"

"Where did you get that paper?"

"I just found it tacked up on the post-office door. There's one on the town-house door—you can see it from here. Calista has found one in her mail. The police must be sending 'em broadcast—showing that he is a desperate critter. Probably the detectives went through here in the night and tacked up the notices—not suspecting that he was hidden right here in this town. I'm going to the sheriff and have him arrested."

Mr. Wing had held up the cap'n on a street corner.

"You better think twice before you go to the sheriff with that paper," said the voice of Mr. Foster, who had come up behind them. "I have had a look at that paper, myself. And the nickings in that old wood type show just where it was printed. It was set up and printed in our own office, Cap'n Sproul—and this man did it for revenge."

Mr. Wing attempted to be vociferous, but the other checked him.

"Even a half-blind printer can identify the type. It's a cheap attempt to discredit me—a foolish attempt. It's so obvious that it is boyish. You haven't seen very much of the world, Professor Wing."

The cap'n grabbed the sheet and stuck it under Wing's nose.

"If you did this, you'd better own up to me. It'll be proved, anyway, and it may help you some if you'll own up and save further wear and tear on the feelings. Did you use my printing office to do this? Own up!"

"He ought to be sent to going on his way! He ain't any credit to this place! I only wanted to get him to going. He's probably all that and more as soon as we find out——"

"I'll make ye eat this paper and then I'll——" thundered the cap'n, but Mr. Foster broke in with pleading voice and put up protesting palm.

"Let me handle the matter, sir.



"They stood in front of me and hugged and kissed and twitted me."

Really it's only between Wing and myself. I will satisfy my own interests fully, cap'n."

"How? By hosswhipping him in the square?"

"Oh, no! We don't want to have any such scandal connected with our happy office. I wish to stay here in town, sir, and if Mr. Wing will step across to the notary's office with us, sir, and sign a paper admitting that he printed the circular and made it public, I'll throw off all claims for damages and shake hands with him."

The cap'n grabbed Mr. Wing's arm and hustled him across the street.

"You're gentler with him than I would be," he assured Mr. Foster. "I'm

getting to have a high respect for your general character, sir. Wing, you have had your lesson and a good example set for you in the future. See that you mind your eye after this."

This was on a Thursday.

"Wing," said Mr. Foster, folding the statement after the humbled printer had signed it, "we'll leave what you're owing me as an open account. I'll collect when the time comes right."

On Friday Mr. Foster informed the cap'n that the extra work would delay publication until Saturday morning.

"But Wing and I will sit up all night and put the paper through the press," he added. "We can

probably get to printing about midnight. I don't suppose you care to sit up as late as that?"

"No, I like my regular sleep at my time of life. But I'll come down at six in the morning and help get 'em into the mail. How's that?"

"Excellent!" agreed Mr. Foster.

It was still dark at six on that Saturday morning. But the cap'n rose with a fine sense of relish in his new avocation and made all haste to the printing office, swinging a lantern.

There was a dim light in the rear room, but the premises were quiet and seemed to be deserted.

Horace Greeley sat up in his nest on the editorial desk and blinked at the

lantern's light. Ben Franklin came slouching through the door from the pressroom. His ears flapped more limply than ever and his demeanor registered deep gloom.

A queer grunt hailed the cap'n when he tramped into the rear room.

Mr. Wing sat on a stool placed close to an iron pillar that supported the ceiling; he was lashed securely to the pillar and was gagged with a roll of newspaper. For the first few minutes after the cap'n released him, he flailed his arms and worked his jaws. Then language burst from him.

It was an incoherent mélange of horrible profanity, accusations, and explanations, but Cap'n Sproul, by listening intently and separating the wheat of information from the chaff of anathema, learned that Mr. Foster had suddenly grabbed Mr. Wing, had trussed him up, and then had held in front of his nose various proof slips for him to read, afterward putting the handfuls of type into the make-up on the bed of the press. And through all that dreadful business, Calista Widd had been present, aiding and abetting.

"They've eloped!" shrieked Mr. Wing. "They have put the news into your paper! They let me read it first. They've eloped! They stood in front of me and hugged and kissed and twitted me. They twisted up them circulars I printed and tickled my nose and ears and made fun of me. I had to watch 'em printing that paper—knowing what was in it! Talk about his forgiving and shaking hands! They made it hell for me!"

"Well, you had run up quite a bill with him," growled the cap'n.

"Go read your paper! Read it! He has ruined it and disgraced it!"

The cap'n picked a sheet from the pile of printed papers and set his lantern on a shelf and prepared to read.

"As for me, I'm leaving! I shall never darken these doors again!" raged

Mr. Wing. "I shall depart from this town. I can't face the public. Good-by! Read your paper and see what you've got on your hands. That's what you're condoning!"

He went forth into the gloom of the morning, Ben Franklin waddling solemnly at his heels. Horace Greeley spat a disgusted farewell as they passed.

Cap'n Sproul was first of all interested in the new name of the publication. It was *The Hornet*, with this subtitle: "We Sting only Our Enemies."

"Sounds businesslike!" he muttered.

The principal scare-head story was captioned: "Sensational Elopement," and gave all the details of the departure from town of Ozro Foster and Miss Calista Widd, with a spicy description of the humiliation of Solon Wing, to which was appended a copy of his writing of retraction, along with a derogatory sketch of his general character. It was suggested that his punishment was good enough for him. The article ended by stating that after a honeymoon week-end at the shire town, Mr. and Mrs. Foster would return to Scotaze and would welcome friends at the *Hornet* office.

"That's what I call fresh, up-to-date, and lively news," declared the cap'n, flapping commendatory palm on the sheet. "I hope he has printed papers enough to supply the demand."

The rousing heap of sheets beside the press reassured him on that point.

The cat came strolling in, regarding the cap'n with interrogatory eyes.

"I'll say to you what I'll remark to your friend, Foster, when he shows up Monday morning," declared Cap'n Sproul. "I'll tell him that I reckon I have picked the right team to run this paper, and I hope that you and he are going to like the town well enough to stay with us."

"Prow-ye-ao-u-w!" affirmed Horace Greeley.

Don Pavlo *and the* Baby Doll

By Grace Lea Arny

Author of "The Cad," "When Jill Came Tumbling After," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

Another charming story of Jack and Jill, and a plan of Jill's that worked out not quite as she planned.

"It sounds absurd, I know," said Jill, in a voice that protested the absurdity.

"I don't think so at all, my dear," Kitty assured her, and stirred a second cup of tea with the same enthusiasm with which she had stirred her first.

"And it's so hard to make Jack understand!"

"I know. Walt is exactly the same way. All husbands are." From her tone one might have supposed Kitty conversant with all husbands through all ages. She was determined not to be outdone by Jill in the possession of a jealous husband. "Why, my dear, I went into a drug store with Danny Hawes for a cup of chocolate the other — Danny, whom I've known all my life! And it nearly broke up a happy home!"

Jill heaved a pensive little sigh by way of turning the conversation back in her own direction. It was her problem that was under discussion—not Kitty's.

"It's too ridiculous! Do have another cake," she said.

The sunshine of the clear, cold January afternoon struck broadly through the wide casement windows of Jill's living room, but the wind whistled eerily around the corners of the house and the burning log in the fireplace was a very welcome sight. Over their tea-cups Jill and Kitty set themselves to the solving of the problem.

"That first time that he came—after Jack and I were married," said Jill anent Don Pavlo, who was the problem, "it was awfully hard to make Jack understand. Then he went off on one of his trips to the ends of the earth, and I thought that settled him. But no, sir! Up he bobs again just when Jack's sent off to the border—and then there was trouble. Well, I simply packed my suit case and started out to Jack, so we could have Christmas together—and there was Don Pavlo on the very same train. Why he should have been inspired to set out for the camp at just that time goodness only knows. But there he was. Well—I thought I never would get through explaining that. And now—he's back in town—and he makes me so uncomfortable! Sometimes I think he's laughing at me, and then again he seems so dreadfully in earnest—"

Jill's wide brown eyes, the very color of a fallen oak leaf, were half ashamed, half thrilled with her confession, but Kitty nodded coolly, set her empty cup upon the table, and spread one slim-fingered hand toward the fire.

"There's just one thing to do to a man like that," she told Jill impressively. "Marry him!"

"Marry him!" echoed startled Jill, a vision of bearded Mormons and the temple at Salt Lake City flashing into her mind.

"To another girl, of course. I'm not

suggesting polygamy for you. If you want to put an end to his laughing, just hunt up some nice girl and marry him off——"

"Suppose he—doesn't want to?"

Jill blushed violently as she said it. Not for the world would she have had Kitty think she was suggesting that Don Pavlo's attachment to her was so strong—— But then Kitty's high-handed way of marrying a man off, willy-nilly——

"No man wants to—when it comes to that," said Kitty.

She spoke in the oracular and cynical way that was, with her, the result of four years' class work and a dramatic club at Newcomb. The words on her vivid young lips, the assumed sophistication in her long gray eyes, were things to make an eavesdropper chuckle. Jill thought Kitty the very cleverest girl she had ever known.

"Propinquity," Kitty orated, "is the greatest factor in romance. What you have to do, my dear, is to invite the girl to visit you, then have him up some night—see that they meet frequently and that the meetings have a proper setting. There's a lot of interesting psychology in things of that sort—as to the effect the color of the girl's dress has on the man's mood——"

"But how on earth could any one ever tell beforehand—about his mood?" cried Jill. "And suppose the girl didn't have a dress of the right color!"

"Some things," said Kitty loftily,

"you have to take a chance on. The question is, who—whom could you ask?"

They reviewed Jill's list of eligibles and decided, after much debate, upon one Constance Saunders.

"She's pretty," said Kitty, telling off the successful contestant's points, "she has lots of good-looking clothes, she's a small-town girl—and they've got it all over city girls when it comes to managing men—she isn't engaged or she would have written you about it, and you visited her the summer after we graduated, so you owe her something. Now, then! Write to her tonight and ask her down for Mardi Gras."

"Not then!" protested Jill. "We



Don Pavlo took the picture from her hand. "Pretty," he said.

"Does she ever come to town?"

were going across the lake—to Covington—just Jack and I. The woods will be wonderful—and carnival's so tiresome!"

There are always sacrifices to be made. It was so obvious that carnival was the time of all others to stage the plan that Jill's dream of an imitation honeymoon in the land of dogwood and wild azaleas went up the chimney in the wreathing smoke.

Kitty was very efficient. She outlined the scheme to the finest details. She ran back up the steps after she had taken leave of Jill a half hour later to say:

"Now you be very careful not to let your Don Pavlo know what you're up to. Don't blush when you mention her to him. Don't let him see you watching him for signs of awakening interest. And whatever you do, don't go straight and tell Jack everything we've said this afternoon!"

Jill's thoughts were in a chaos when Kitty had departed. Wondering as to just how much she might tell Jack, she burned the gray; a flash-light remembrance of Kitty's reference to "your Don Pavlo" sent an extra and unnecessary jerk of vinegar into the salad dressing.

Somehow she achieved the feat of telling Jack only about nine-tenths of Kitty's conversation. She hadn't meant to tell him that much, but when you've been married the short while that Jill had, and haven't seen your husband all day long, you naturally tell him everything you know.

She sent an urgent little blue note off that night to Constance Saunders, who lived in a plantation town in the northern part of the State.

It was an affectionate epistle, written on the latest in gray linen stationery, that the unsuspecting Constance sent back to her within the week. She'd love to come, she wrote. It was so sweet of Jill to ask her. She was simply

thrilled at the prospect. A visit to the city during carnival was the one thing of all others that she desired. She was simply crazy to see Jill!

Kitty smiled over that note, a smile that shifted from lips to eyes and flickered there.

"Poor lamb," she said, "she little knows!"

A vaguely uneasy consciousness of tampering with fate moved Jill to dangerous resentment of that remark.

"It isn't as if he weren't *awfully* nice," she said, "one of the very *nicest* men I've ever known! Why, I'd marry him myself in a minute——"

"Oh-ho!" teased Kitty. "Be mighty careful, Mistress Jill! It's a good thing Jack wasn't round to hear you."

Jill sent her a scathing glance and let it go at that. She couldn't afford to quarrel with Kitty then. The plan was Kitty's plan.

All unbefriended, Don Pavlo walked into the trap. If he had been any one else, Jack might have obeyed the instinct of brotherhood and warned him, but he, remember, was Jack's own idea of a *bête noire*. Let him watch his step.

Mindful of Kitty's warnings, Jill mentioned Constance with admirable casualty. "The dearest girl!" she called her, and moved as if to lay aside the picture that had fallen from the table at a carefully planned psychological moment.

Don Pavlo took the picture from her hand.

"Pretty," he said. "Does she ever come to town?"

"Why—isn't it strange that you should ask that now?" cried Jill. "She's coming down for Mardi Gras. I thought I'd mentioned it."

Her guile sent nervous little fingers to her hair—that ever-present help in time of trial; it fixed her leaf-brown eyes upon Constance's picture in a veritable stare; and, try as she would to suppress the fact, it sent a flush to the

very edge of the bangs upon her forehead.

Let it be known, in passing, that Don Pavlo took note of this. He looked back at the photograph, and because she dared not lift her eyes, Jill didn't see him smile.

"I hope I have a seat in the first three rows," he said.

"Oh," laughed Jill, and raised eager, sparkling eyes at that, "of course I'll want you to meet her and help to give her a good time! Jack's getting invitations for the balls."

Don Pavlo, out of the utter goodness of his heart, as you might say, went Jack one better and procured a coveted call-out for the expected guest. He had told Jill once that there wasn't much he wouldn't do to see the dimple that came when she said, "Thank you!" He spoke, suggestively, of going out to Noyes for a court-bouillion dinner some day. Begué's for breakfast was not what it used to be, but still—it was one of the things to do for guests at carnival.

"He makes me almost ashamed—if Constance weren't *such* a dear!" cried Jill to Kitty over the telephone.

Kitty's conviction that the plan must end in the wedding of the chosen two had entered into Jill's soul.

You would have understood that had you gone with Jill to meet Constance when she arrived. Out of the crowd that streamed between sooty trains and oily tracks to the dingy waiting room and thence to scarcely less dingy street cars and taxis and hacks, Constance appeared like a whitecap on a murky sea. She was a miracle of spotlessness. There were no smudges on her cheeks, but a faint, delicious flush; her hair was sleek and smooth, her eyes were very bright, and the sheer white collar that showed above her dark tailored suit, the white kid gloves she wore, might have just come from their wrappings—as, indeed, they had. Con-

stance traveled with such extras in her grip. As for the other details, cold cream, a small round box marked "Dorin," and hair nets, are known to the initiate.

"My dear!"

"Isn't this simply wonderful?"

Thus Jill and the visitor fell upon each other's necks.

Jack rendered what might be called the average masculine verdict upon Constance that night, while Jill gave her hair the customary hundred strokes.

"Nice little baby doll," he said.

"She's fun to kid along. But you don't think your friend Carey's going to fall, do you? I thought he was supposed to be one of these awfully clever guys."

Jill's brush missed a stroke at the indefinable hint of sarcasm in his tone.

"He is clever! And that," she instructed Jack, "is the very reason he will fall for a girl like Constance. Clever men always do," she obviously quoted Kitty here, and Jack grinned as he realized the fact. "For the matter of that, Constance is cleverer than you'd think from those big blue eyes of hers. She's clever enough to keep the men from knowing she's clever," Jill quoted further.

Upon the occasion of the first meeting with Don Pavlo, Jill and Kitty had expended a great amount of thought, and the results were justifiable. It was a Sunday night supper party, just Kitty and Walt, Jack and Jill, Constance and Don Pavlo—a chafing-dish supper party, with Jill's very prettiest china and silver adorning the board, the blue flame of the alcohol lamp leaping merrily, and the gold and crimson flames from the fire on the front hearth sending dancing lights into all the corners of the rooms.

Constance was altogether beautiful—as she should have been. She wore a dress of dull green crêpe that came demurely to her wrists, but missed her ankles and thereby gave a glimpse of

silken sheen and a satisfying view of little high-heeled slippers. Her hair, which held the color of the flames, but deepened to old mahogany in its coils, was combed quaintly high upon her head. Her eyes were intensely, innocently blue, her lips were very red, and her cheeks had the tint of a Duchess rose or a cloud at a certain stage of sunset. She sounds too beautiful, I know, but such girls happen every now and then.

Kitty, after one look at her, took a seat at Walt's elbow, and found herself questioning, for the first time, the wisdom of their plan. And Jill—surreptitiously, and against all the laws of hospitality—bestowed upon Jack's plate a more generous helping of shrimp wiggle than she had given any one else. This was, of course, in the middle of the evening. In the first part of the evening and in the last, she watched him in a mute amazement that was tinged with dismay, for he seemed to take a sudden and perverse delight in talking to Constance and thus blocking Don Pavlo's game.

But that merely gave Don Pavlo an opportunity of studying the picture Constance made. She appealed strongly to his artistic soul, that was evident. The sound of her voice was quite in keeping with her beauty, her laughter was as sweetly infectious as a child's, and her conversation was the most delightful nonsense.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, as Kitty told Jill in the five-ten-fifteen minutes that she required to powder her nose and put on her hat when the



"A baby doll and a clever man—I've never known it to fail,"
see beyond those

time for departure came, the plan had "taken." Whether Don Pavlo had impressed Constance it was rather hard to tell because, as Kitty pointed out, she had given as much of her attention to Walt and Jack as she had to him.

"It's a way these small-town girls have, my dear," she said. "They try to monopolize every man in sight. She'll be calling Jack by his first name before the week is out!"

However, Jill found that Don Pavlo *had* made an impression, and a strong one—if adjectives have value. She discovered this when she went to bid her guest good night.

"He's *positively* fascinating! I don't know when I've met a man I've liked so much," Constance assured her. "What is that *attractive* name you call him by? Did you ever *see* such eyes in a mere man's face? It positively isn't fair! And he's been all over the face of the globe, hasn't he? Have you known him long? Is he mortgaged?"



chanted Kitty. "Do you think she's as crazy about him as he is about her? It's so hard to big blue eyes of hers."

When he was leaving, he asked me to go driving to-morrow afternoon. Of course I realize that he's only being nice to me because I'm visiting you, but, my dear, I'm so *thrilled*!"

She swept a heap of frilly, blue-ribbed lingerie onto a chair as she talked, and swathed herself in a gray kimono sprayed with cherry blossoms.

Jill slept uneasily that night and felt the skeins of destiny tangling in her hands in the most nightmarish fashion.

With the next day, the thing was in full swing. Don Pavlo phoned in the morning to make sure of the drive in the afternoon. There was a theater party that night and supper at the Cave.

Never was plan more easily and unconsciously acquiesced in by the parties deeply concerned. After that second night, Constance was calling Don Pavlo by that same attractive name. When speaking directly to him, she shortened it to "Don," which lent a trace of particular intimacy that even

the assured gentleman of many lands and many loves found pleasing. She called Jack "Jack," as Kitty had foreseen, but there was a subtle difference in the calling. What she didn't see—to call anything—after that first supper party. The poor boy was so dreadfully busy just now, Kitty said.

They went to Noyes for the court-bouillon dinner that Don Pavlo had suggested, and another time to Begué's for breakfast. Daffodils and violets and sweet olive were out upon the Canal Street flower stands; the late January winds came over a sun-warmed river and carried a whisper of the spring; and to Constance and Don Pavlo it seemed to carry word of all those things with which the poets find the spring replete.

They walked in the park of an afternoon; they made excursions into the old French part of town; Royal Street knew them, and the antique shops. There were flowers and candy—

"I never dreamed of anything like this!" gasped Jill to Kitty, one of the afternoons when Don Pavlo had taken Constance out. "Why, he's rushing her—*fiercely*. There's no other word to express it! I never knew he could be so attentive to any girl."

"A baby doll and a clever man—I've never known it to fail," chanted Kitty. "Do you think she's as crazy about him as he is about her? It's so hard to see beyond those big blue eyes of hers."

"I'm sure of it!" said Jill. "She asked me yesterday what his people were like. To tell the honest truth, I'll be glad when it's all over. I suppose the balls next week will bring things to a point."

There was a certain soreness around Jill's heart that she wouldn't have had Jack know of for the world. But she admitted to herself that she hadn't expected Don Pavlo to be swept off his feet in quite such an absurd fashion by a—baby doll! The ridiculous name that Jack had given Constance that first evening came out with an almost vicious little fling.

"And it isn't," said Jill, "as if he were the first man who had ever rushed her. Don't you remember the time she used to have when she was in college? And she has at least a half dozen photographs on her dresser now—and she's had special-delivery letters and loads of other mail even in the short while she's been here."

By the time that Mardi Gras itself arrived, Jill was nearly exhausted from her numerous duties as a chaperon. There was the hint of telltale shadows underneath her eyes, and her smile was somewhat strained. Her dimple was very slow in following it.

"I'll be so glad when it's all over," she said, again to Jack. "Constance doesn't seem to feel it at all. I never saw such a girl. But things just seem to be running away with me!"

Jill went through the worst of it triumphantly, however, because women can do such things, but she remembered afterward only a weird maze of music and maskers, sunlight and confetti, torch glory and the glittering of pageants winding between street crowds—and always in the foreground, Constance, radiantly, shimmeringly gowned, with an attendant Don Pavlo, oddly suggestive, in his evening clothes, of a tall black beetle. There were other men who came to dance and stayed to dangle, but Jill's attention was fixed upon Don Pavlo.

She was not reminded, in those days, of the teasing laughter in his black eyes when he looked at her. She had no cause whatever to feel uneasy when he chanced to take a vacant place beside her. The silly scheme that she and Kitty had outlined had succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. Don Pavlo had lost his heart entirely to the baby doll, was fast being carried on to the swirling deeps of matrimony.

"Has he asked her yet?" was Kitty's cry.

She rang up at the dead of night, it seemed to Jill, to ask the silly question, and Jill was at her wit's end to answer circumspectly, knowing the acoustic properties of a bungalow and that Constance and Don Pavlo were, at the moment, holding soulful converse with the embers of a dying fire in the living room.

The next day but one, Constance was going home. The very night of Mardi Gras the cold weather broke, and a warm pall of cloud and rain crept over the city and to all intents and purposes anchored there. Ash Wednesday dawned gray and sodden. And garbed in gray, subdued as any nun behind her veil, Constance went out at noon to luncheon with Don Pavlo. Jill watched her go, appraisingly.

"He's bound to ask her to-day," she told herself, "and Constance knows it."

From out that mysterious something that scientists call the subconscious mind flashed the remembrance of the day when Jack had asked *her*—just such a day as this, only it was night, and they were coming home from the theater, brought to an electric consciousness of their isolation in a glistening, drizzly, for-the-most-part-sleeping world.

"If there wasn't another soul in existence—would you care?" Jack had whispered, his voice husking between the words.

And, "I—don't believe—I should," she had whispered back.

In a conscientious, "Bless-you-my-children" frame of mind, Jill waited through the afternoon for Constance to come home and tell the news. In vain she waited. At something after four o'clock, the phone shrilled, and over a very bad connection she caught the sound of the familiar voice and grasped a trace of facts—the last evening, dinner downtown, theater—Would it be all right?

So the climax was postponed. For the first time in many days, Jack and Jill had dinner to themselves. It was something in the nature of a reunion, but by nine o'clock Jack's

eyes grew heavy in spite of all that he could do to keep them open. So Jill sent him off to bed. She wanted to sit up and wait for Constance. She had an interesting book, she said, and the fire was so nice.

She sat there with her book in front of the big fireplace, luxuriating in the cushions of the biggest wicker chair and the soft light from the amber-



"I'm so glad, honey!" whispered Jill, "so awfully, awfully glad! And I want you to know he's one of the very nicest men—"

shaded reading lamp at her elbow. But the book soon lost its hold upon her attention. The people in its pages were not so interesting as those around her.

She sat there dreaming before the fire. She dozed occasionally, without doubt. The sound of voices at the door mingled with a dream, persisted, grew out of it. She never knew how long they had been running on before Constance's laughter opened her eyes quite wide. She sat there a moment, dazed, and then there was a hand upon the door, the click of a key in the lock.

Constance opened the door, shut it behind her, and came breathlessly across the room, to drop on the rug beside the cushioned chair.

"Why, Jill—I never thought you would wait up!" she cried.

Her cheeks were wonderfully flushed, her eyes a startling bit of heaven blue in the firelight, and then and there Jill knew that the smothered laughter at the door had been the echo of a kiss. The curve and crimson of the lips betrayed it.

"You outrageous child!" she said, with the nearest assumption of matronly dignity that she could manage. "Have you had a lovely day?"

Constance rocked back upon her heels and made a face of penitence one instant. Then, without more ado, she cried her news to whoever, of all the world, might listen.

"The loveliest day—the very loveliest day! Oh, Jillikins, I am the *happiest* girl!"

She stripped the glove from her left hand with eager, fumbling fingers and clustering jewels splintered a ray of firelight. She put her head down upon Jill's lap and laughed ecstatically—if somewhat nervously.

Jill reached one soft little hand to the laughing lips.

"I'm so glad, honey!" she whispered, "so awfully, *awfully* glad! I'm not surprised, though. Did you think I'd

be? And I want you to know he's one of the very *niciest* men——"

The baby doll sat suddenly erect.

"Why, Jill! How funny! I didn't know you'd ever met him—Sid Devreaux——"

"Don Pavlo——" cried Jill.

"Oh, *he*? Why, you *didn't* think—— I've been in love with Sid for the longest time! And he wouldn't ask me because he didn't have anything but the plantation and that's in debt. But I made him jealous of Don Pavlo, and he came flying to the city. I saw him at the ball last night—and to-day we met him on Canal Street, and he almost carried me off by the hair of my head!" At a happy recollection, she paused to laugh again.

"You mean to say," accused Jill, "that you've been simply flirting with Don Pavlo all this time? I can't believe it of you, Con! You've made him think you care—and he isn't a man who easily forgets—it isn't *fair*!"

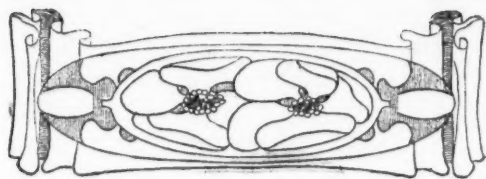
Eyes and lips rounded, tone the equal of a cooing dove, Constance answered that. It was impossible to see the thoughts behind her wide blue eyes.

"I know perfectly well he doesn't easily forget, Jill. He told me that the second time I met him—the afternoon when he took me driving. He's mentioned it once or twice since then. He said he had only cared deeply for one woman in his life—and she had married another man. Positively, it was the most pathetic thing!"

Jill pulled the tassel of the reading lamp and so shut off the light.

"It's time we were both in bed," she said, somewhat hastily. "The fire's almost out—it's safe. Sleep late in the morning, if you like."

The startled expression of her face was hidden in the shadow, her voice was reasonably calm, but to her great dismay Jill found that her lips would curve into a smile, in the most utterly foolish, conscious little way.



The Singular Wooers of Miss Beckwith

By Mary Davoren Chambers

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE CALHOUN COBB

"What a woman!" they said of her, after the deed was done.

MISS BECKWITH was so tall that before she had been an hour in the college, she had been dubbed "The Obelisk" by Miss Conrowe, who is assistant in history and the *enfant terrible* of our faculty. But Miss Beckwith was not much of an *enfant*—no, indeed; she was what you might call "far advanced in her nine-and-twenties." She had an ugly, distinguished face, jet-black hair, and tragic eyes that seemed black until close inspection showed them to be astonishingly blue. All sorts of seams and furrows and sorrow lines creased her face, yet when she smiled and showed a mouthful of oddly irregular teeth, her whole countenance softened and she looked brilliantly young.

"She never got those deep lines from correcting chemistry notebooks," said Miss Conrowe. "They might drive her crazy, but they wouldn't sink in like that. And don't you notice that she walks around as if she were trailing clouds of mystery, as one of the poets in English Three says? Where there's a mystery, there's always a history," she concluded oracularly.

Miss Beckwith always dressed in black, dead black that absorbed the light and never reflected any, except where it was worn shiny from the back of her chair. And dignity! Well, she was the kind of person that you just naturally open the door for, and flatten yourself against the wall to let pass, and of whom you say to your bosom friend in private: "Wouldn't you give anything to see her run to a fire?" Only Miss Beckwith would never run, but she would get there just the same, as sure as a law of nature.

The girls were all wild over her from the start, and used to fill up their electives with her subject, which did not help to make her popular with the rest of us. Also, we thought "Prexy" made more of her than she should have. Consequently we were inclined to let her alone at first. But she was not the kind that could be haughtily ignored, for if she so much as asked you to go with her to the drug store, she could make you feel all complimented up. She somehow seemed to draw people after her like a magnet. It was not anything she said or anything she



It was plain he was stringing things out just to keep talking to her. No doubt of it, she was a charmer!

did—it was something *in* her that attracted you like a loadstone, and made you feel you'd give anything to be friends with her.

One of my miscellaneous duties as secretary to the president was to corral the new members of the faculty into their respective church homes. Miss Beckwith's was St. George's, of which the Reverend Silas Tillery, the only unmarried member of our board of

trustees, was rector. As she moved up the aisle after the usher that first Sunday, wearing her best suit and her always-the-same air of distinction, I thought the Reverend Silas sat up and took notice.

After church I introduced them. Mr. Tillery is a rotund little man with a premature bald spot, an upstanding nose, and an all-over-rosy face. He gazed up at Miss Beckwith through his glasses with an expression of wonder and worship and joy that was almost indecent so early in the game, and he immediately asked her: first, to teach a Bible class; then to help with the Girls' Friendly; and after that to come to his Wednesday evening teachers' conferences. It was plain he was stringing things out just to keep talking to her. She consented

to everything with a beautiful air of deference, but it was like the deference of an empress. No doubt of it, she was a charmer!

Mr. Tillery was a very busy man. He had a big church with every known kind of Christian activity—from dress-making classes to a baseball club—always going at full blast. He was on the board of trustees of everything in the city, and was chaplain of the State

penitentiary, three miles out on the River Road. Until his discovery of Miss Beckwith, he had always been too busy to attend our trustee meetings, but after that he couldn't be hired to miss one, and in order to find more frequent excuses to come to the college, he would dig up a visiting bishop or some other kind of lord high admiral every week or so, and pretend he must be shown the buildings and grounds. And there was always some Girls' Friendly business to be discussed with Miss Beckwith before he could leave.

Once during a board meeting—I had been called in to give some statistics—Mr. Shackleton, the treasurer, proposed that a certain scholarship should be abolished and the money used for current expenses. Mr. Shackleton hated scholarships and was strong for current expenses. The rector was gazing out of the window in a rapt kind of way and not paying any attention to the discussion.

Simultaneously with the chairman's words: "Those in favor of this motion—" there came from the corridor a girl's shrill chant:

"She walks, the lady of my delight—"

"Aye," said the rector dreamily.

I knew, if he had been in his senses, he would not have voted "aye" to one of Mr. Shackleton's stingy old motions, so I followed his gaze out of the window, and behold, Miss Beckwith was sauntering under the reddened raples beneath the terrace! She was reading a letter, and even at that distance, her face looked glorified. I wondered from whom was the letter. The rector's eyes were wistful.

The intimacy between the two proceeded by leaps and bounds. They were often to be seen walking together down the River Road, with Jerry, the college dog—who could not bear to let Miss Beckwith out of his sight—

careering all around them. Once when Miss Walden—economics and sociology—asked me to accompany her on a field trip to the penitentiary, we saw the pair of them seated on a rock that overhangs the river, about two miles out of town. This first two miles is the loveliest walk in the place, but is not favored as a promenade because it leads to the prison; hence our friends had all the privacy they could wish for.

Miss Beckwith grew younger and lovelier every week. Her eyes lost their tragedy; her step grew buoyant; she played and laughed with the girls just like one of them. We had not known that she had it in her to blossom out like that. Curiously enough, the rector did not act quite like a man whose line is prospering, and he preached a good deal on the acceptance of suffering.

A year before, the State governor had appointed a new warden to the penitentiary, one Major Lucius Hipton, retired from the army. They said he was a splendid warden, and like a father to the prisoners, but in his relations with any one outside the rank of convicted felon, he was haughty and overbearing, if not absolutely discourteous. One afternoon I was downtown with Miss Beckwith, and as she preceded me out of Newcomb's Dry Goods Store, Major Hipton's motor was slowly passing the curb. Greatly to my amazement, he raised his gloved hand and made a motion in the direction of the peak of his cap. The gesture was purely symbolic, but from him it appeared a rare courtesy, for he made it a rule to be blind to everybody on the street except a convict on parole.

Of course I wondered how this marvel had come to pass, and equally of course I did not dare to ask her. She was lovely, but she seemed hedged about with something that kept one from making free with her.

The worst was yet to come! One Sunday afternoon, the rector engi-

neered Major Hipton up to the college to make us an address at the vesper service. Three remarkable things happened:

(1) Jerry welcomed the warden rapturously, though he is very grumpy with strangers, and the warden patted him on the head and said: "Hello, old Jerry, good old dog!" as affectionately as if Jerry had been a "lifer."

(2) Miss Beckwith wore a dark-blue chiffon waist to chapel. It matched her eyes, and was becoming to the last degree.

(3) After the address was over and we had all been brought up to be presented and to tell him how perfectly splendid it was, Major Hipton escaped to crank up his machine. Miss Beckwith impulsively stopped him on the doorstep, and they stood in earnest conversation for a while, the warden holding his motor cap in his hand and looking as if he stood in the presence of the Queen of Sheba.

Mr. Tillery watched them from the hall with the same expression he wears when he preaches on the acceptance of suffering, a mixture of pain and resignation.

Miss Conrowe and I talked it over that night.

"I'll bet on the warden," she said.

"I'm not so sure," said I. "He's a widower, and old enough to be her father, even if she is the thirty-five she looked when she came. She's got down to twenty-seven now. Besides, both he and she have a born-to-the-purple temperament that would not make for domestic harmony."

"I'll bet on Katherine to harmonize him," persisted Miss Conrowe. "Already, she can make him take off his hat. And what, I ask you, did she do that for—she who believes in the conservation of energy—unless she was getting him into training?"

As I thought it over, and remembered how our little rector had looked

as he had watched them talking together, I, too, decided that it might be safe to bet on the warden.

One becomes sensitive to atmospheres in college life. I felt something in the air long before the day I went to Prexy's office to take her morning dictation and met Miss Beckwith coming out. Roses bloomed in her cheeks; her eyes shone; she looked young and beautiful. As she passed, she gave me a smile so full of radiance that I felt flooded all over with sunshine and lifted up and glorified.

Prexy sat gravely at her desk, and she asked me at once to answer some letters she had received from candidates for the position of professor of chemistry, shortly to be vacant at Northmore College. Our president likes her secretary to control emotion during business hours, but I gasped!

It seemed as if the bottom would crumble out of everything if Miss Beckwith left! Everybody loved her and respected her and somehow or other felt the better for having known her. I had not realized how important she was to me until now. The corners of my mouth went down, and tears came to my eyes.

Prexy looked at me sharply.

"We shall not easily fill her place," she said. "But she told me on her appointment that she could not stay with us for many years."

It is not a secretary's place to ask questions, but Prexy must have known that I was bursting with curiosity. She said: "Miss Beckwith is shortly to be married"—which left me worse than before—and then went on to tell me what to write to the architects about the height of the radiators in the new library.

A day or two later, I went down to the rectory for the blue prints of the library; Mr. Tillery was on the building committee and the placing of those

radiators was giving trouble. The housekeeper said he was out, but would be back soon, and she showed me into the study. Miss Beckwith sat by the window. She was in one of her abstracted moods and did not notice my entrance; her eyes were absorbedly watching the street.

A covered motor car stopped before the door and the rector and another man got out, mounted the steps, and came directly into the study. The man was a splendid-looking fellow, big, blond, with a mouth that was sensitive, but not strong. At once, I knew where I had seen him before. It was the day I had gone on that field trip with Miss Walden. *He had been working on the penitentiary grounds with a number of other convicts!*

I was so astounded I could not move, and in the general preoccupation, nobody paid any more attention to me than if I had been a mission chair.

The man went straight over to Miss Beckwith and dropped on his knees beside her, and sobbed and wept and put his head in her lap and repeated thickly, "Oh, Kathie, Kathie!" He looked degraded and ashamed, but through it all I could not help thinking how incongruous it was to call this strong, dignified

woman "Kathie." The diminutive was about as appropriate as it would have been to Pallas Athene.

Miss Beckwith sat there and supported him and mothered him, and put



"Oh, Kathie, Kathie!" he repeated thickly. He looked degraded and ashamed, but Miss Beckwith sat there and supported him and mothered him.

her hand on his head—she has wonderful hands, finely nervous and sensitive; they can almost speak—and she seemed to infold him and wrap him around with love. Through all his suffering, one could see that he was comforted and strengthened.

Before the day was over, we all had what you might call a synopsis of the preceding chapters. Gerald Begbie and Katherine Beckwith had been engaged to be married when Gerald had taken two hundred dollars from his employer to complete the payment on a cottage he was having built for them. He had wanted to present her with the deed of it. He had told her that he had the money saved and had been ashamed to let her know that he had not. Of course he had hoped to replace what he had taken before the loss should be discovered—it seems he had similarly “borrowed” small sums before—but this time he had been found out, and the employer had been merciless.

Gerald was out of the penitentiary only on parole now, and would not be allowed to go outside the State bounds for I don't know how long.

With this past behind him—with the future before him of having to live it down—our fine Miss Beckwith mar-

ried him. She gave up the field of usefulness, the surety of promotion, at the college—not to speak of her chances with the rector and the warden—and went and married that convict!

“What a woman!” said Miss Conrowe, after the deed was done. “Here she had two men in love with her, besides one man who stole for her, and any of the three would go through fire and water for her!”

“Are we so sure the warden was in love with her?” I questioned. “Maybe he was only in her confidence and helping her out.”

“Helping her out! Cat's foot!” cried Miss Conrowe.

One or two other comments leaked out.

“A rather charming young malefactor,” was reported to be the warden's summing up. “But his saving grace is that he loves her devotedly, and she will surely be his redemption. God bless her!”

“And *him*,” said the rector. “God bless him, and grant him all happiness!”

I ask you, isn't our parson a real game sport, besides being a little Christian gentleman?

FOR AN OLD FIREPLACE

TO fill your heart, pine thickets bent their crest
 And lent you lumps of richness, oozing bright
 When flint and steel smote hands to give them light.
 Oak boughs, more sorber, fell at your behest,
 Shorn of the mistletoe and moss that dressed
 Their green and of old bird nests heaped with white.
 These piled your altar. Edgéd steel must bite
 And stout arms swing and wee hands do their best—
 Blue cold and roughened—where the chips flew wide,
 To make you roar again each silver dawn
 Or yellow sunset time of rattling pane
 And whirled brown leaves. Yet you are justified,
 O hearth, for that sweet life about you drawn
 Has proved the woods gave not their wealth in vain!

JEANNIE PENDLETON HALL.

Mr. Anerley's Mendacities

By Frances Harmer

Author of "Hidden Gold," "A Pair of Pink Shoes," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

You should know Mr. Anerley. He is a most engaging character who will appear in several humorous or whimsical stories in SMITH'S during the year.

I.—MANAGING MIRIAM

MR. DANE ANERLEY emerged from the bathroom, smiling and very clean. He bowed, but apologetically, to the irate line waiting, pitcher in hand, outside the door.

But when he gained the seclusion of his two-room suite, the smile faded. His spirits sank to zero. For Mr. Anerley was out of coffee.

Had a casual observer been stationed, let us say, just over the transom, he might have been surprised that the occupant of that suite should be out of anything. For a delicate luxury was apparent in the furnishings that implied means. True, they might have been chosen by a maiden rather than a man of sixty, for they were of the French bandbox type. The two rooms were connected by an archway, hung with art silk, patterned, as were the cushions, in a blend of forget-me-nots and pink rosebuds on a white ground. The rugs, genuine Persian, also showed these tints, more richly mellowed. The furniture was white wickerwork, the woods white enamel. The black of the frames surrounding cheerful water colors and fine etchings, the shining darkness of two long, low, well-filled bookcases of rosewood, these alone gave a deeper accent to this frivolous abode.

Mr. Anerley went into the small alcove room in which his narrow white

iron bed was placed. He arranged his somewhat complicated ablutionary implements where they would dry. Then, with the care of a Beau Brummel for the nonce deprived of his valet, he began to dress.

When he had finished this process, he surveyed the mirror with a satisfaction no débutante could have rivaled. And he saw a very charming old gentleman indeed, with snowy hair above a narrow, aristocratic face, with a high-bridged nose, surprisingly firm lips, a chin of distinction, smooth shaven. His eyes were large and deeply blue still; his hands were white and well manicured, his figure still lean, and alert in moving.

With another sigh at the small table whereon was arranged a chafing-dish apparatus, Mr. Anerley turned to the stand in the window, spread, alas, for breakfast! The only form of sustenance in sight was one small orange, which Mr. Anerley proceeded to prepare and eat. Then he picked up the morning paper from the hallway outside and, still in a state of depression known only to the coffeeless, began to read—the society news!

The location of his suite was not far from Morningside Park, an oblique view of which, indeed, his sitting-room window boasted, over a vacant lot. It was, therefore, at some distance, and

an inconveniently placed distance, from Fifth Avenue, where, at this very moment, two ladies were discussing his fortunes over their breakfast.

The ladies were his sister—or, rather, half sister—Mrs. Grierson, and his distant cousin, Mrs. Carrington. The former might have been best described in the phrase employed by Dickens *re* the courtiers of the barnstorming cast of "Hamlet"—that is to say, she appeared to have been promoted to the peerage very late in life! Her morning gown was costly, even breathing Paris, but her face had lines at once hard and coarse. Her hands, too, in spite of flashing rings, suggested the washtub. Her eyes, a shade too close together and very decidedly too small, were cunning and not kind.

Mrs. Carrington, on the other hand, stood for weakness of character plus aristocratic antecedents. Her robe was in excellent taste. Beggars would have sued her for pennies—and got them! But not even a beggar would have asked her for counsel!

"I wish, Sophia," thus Mrs. Grierson, "that when you see Dane, you would tell him that you don't approve of his way of living."

"But, Isabella"—Mrs. Carrington seemed to be listening for some sound outside her sitting-room door—"he really does no one any harm. Why should he not have that funny little suite and live by himself, if he wants to?"

"In the first place, it's too expensive," began Mrs. Grierson.

Her hostess turned to her in such surprise that for a moment that expected sound outside the door seemed forgotten.

"Expensive! His rent is only fifty dollars a month, he tells me!"

"Well, and that fifty I allow him."

Mrs. Carrington looked embarrassed. She knew, and Mrs. Grierson knew that she knew, and she knew that Mrs. Gri-

erson knew that she knew, the cause of Mr. Anerley's dependency. Long ago, Mr. Anerley had played Lear to his own half sister, upon whose niggard charity he now subsisted. But Mrs. Carrington dared not refer to this episode. Mrs. Grierson could always stare her down. She really detested the woman, and sided with poor Dane. But her own means were not unlimited, and she had maternal cares that blotted out the thought of Mr. Anerley. Again she listened anxiously toward the door.

"He wouldn't be happy with you, Isabella." Thus far she did venture. Oh, why did she allow this woman to invite herself for dinner, the opera, and a bed overnight? The next time, she really would say it was not convenient!

"He'd be preparing himself for eternal happiness with me," retorted Mrs. Grierson, helping herself to omelet—the ladies had dispensed with an attendant. "I'd see he went to church with George."

A vision of George Grierson obtruded itself on Mrs. Carrington's mind—George, puffy, common, self-satisfied, always boasting of his achievements in fleecing his fellow men—legally—or discussing his religion, which was the worship of a god made in his own image. Poor Dane! He would suffer, in Isabella's dingy, crowded second-best bedroom—in Brooklyn, at that—with George and compulsory churchgoing as the main things in his life.

A sharp tap at the door made Mrs. Carrington start, though she had been listening for it.

"Come in, dear."

A girl came in, a superb young creature, the "finished product" of wealth, birth, breeding, tall, slim, red-haired, somehow suggesting a flame. Hers were the narrow lines, the high-bridged nose, the firm lips and dominant chin, of Dane Anerley. By a freak of heredity, Miriam Carrington resembled an

off line on her mother's side, rather than any nearer kin. Her eyes were vividly blue, her complexion that of a wild rose.

"Good morning, Mumsey. Good morning, Mrs. Grierson." Nothing could ever induce Miriam to say the "Cousin Isabella" for which Mrs. Grierson hungered.

She crossed to the window, fastening her gloves. She was dressed for riding.

"Going out with your young man, Miriam?"

Miriam frowned at the phrase.

"I'm riding with Mr. Merritt, Mrs. Grierson."

"Everything's all right, darling?" Her mother spoke wistfully.

"Not yet, but I did agree to ride with him."

"Bring him back to lunch, then."

"Perhaps."

She kissed her mother, nodded to Mrs. Grierson, and went away. Mrs. Carrington rose and walked to the window. Her guest followed.

"My, but he's fine looking!" commented the latter. "And e-nor-mously rich, isn't he?"

"Yes, and I don't undervalue that," sighed the mother. "But they don't really get on. They quarrel more than engaged people should."

"Better before than after," suggested her companion.

She was deeply interested in the



Mr. Dane Anerley emerged from the bathroom, smiling and very clean.

match. To be ever so slightly, ever so distantly, connected with the Merritt family spelled a distinction greater than any she had yet enjoyed. Mrs. Carrington and Miriam—she ignorantly underrated Dane's social value because he lived in two rooms—seemed her sole door into a world outside of which she stood like a stout, uncomely peri.

"Oh, I don't know. Can people eternally bicker with those they really love? And what use are all his money and family and distinction to her if she doesn't really love him?"

Mrs. Carrington was speaking to her own soul, not to her guest. But her guest answered:

"People with three million dollars, houses in Newport and the Avenue, and all that, can't be very miserable, Sophia. You're too sentimental."

Mrs. Carrington froze. She could sometimes manage a visible congealing, though never a storm. And after a time Mrs. Grierson was sufficiently sensible of the atmosphere to take her leave.

"I'm awfully busy for about a week," she said, in parting. "But then I mean to take Dane's affairs in hand and move him over to Brooklyn. I could use that fifty a month myself."

Mrs. Carrington drew a long breath of relief when her visitor had departed in a taxi. She had more than hinted for the limousine, but it had not been offered to her.

An hour later, Miriam burst into the room, her little cap somewhat awry on her flamelike hair, her vivid blue eyes flashing fire. She was followed, with equal lack of ceremony, by a young man, who snatched his cap off as he entered the door.

"Mother, Mr. Merritt thinks it necessary to say good-by to you before starting for China!" stormed the girl. "He has to go at once!"

"My dear child!" her mother remonstrated, as her daughter swept—as much as one *can* sweep in a riding costume—to the window, where she stood looking out and breathing deeply.

"China as well as anywhere else, since Miriam wishes me out of this country," said the obviously distracted young man. "It really makes no difference to me."

"Then why did you choose China?" demanded Miriam.

"Why not?" He was unaware that he was parodying the March Hare—perhaps because he was as mad as one.

"What is this all about?" Mrs. Carrington turned troubled eyes from one to the other.

"He proposes to distract himself during the honeymoon—which hasn't dawned yet!—by shooting big game," flashed the girl.

"Moons don't dawn," murmured Mrs. Carrington, but she looked at the young man.

"I merely suggested"—he spoke a little sulkily—"that, as Europe's barred for the present, you couldn't have a better time to see Egypt."

"It was that that hurt me. He really hasn't any *feeling*, mother, for all that this dreadful war means! It's spoiled Europe—that's all it means to him. He really hasn't heart enough to love with!"

Guy Merritt winced and turned away.

"My dear"—Mrs. Carrington turned to her daughter—"you know how generously he gave——"

"Of his abundance!" came the retort. "Really, mother dear, I can't sympathize with the fatigue that results from signing checks!"

"Would you like me to enlist?" demanded Guy, swinging back. "I might, if I could be absolutely sure which side was right! But I'm not, you see!"

"I'd like you to be a little too much interested in the realities of life to chuckle at the thought of shooting lions! He did, mother! He really chuckled! Over our honeymoon, too!"

"I didn't chuckle! I only smiled!" Mrs. Carrington was reminded of nursery days. "I remembered how once in the Kongo——"

"Please spare me your hunting reminiscences," said Miriam. "You've said good-by to me. Say it to mamma."

"All right!" Mr. Merritt was now in a white rage. "I'll say it. And understand me, Miriam, I mean just this. A telephone message to my club will get me till five! At five I buy my



"He proposes to distract himself during the honeymoon—
which hasn't dawned yet!—by shooting big
game," flashed the girl.

ticket to China, via California, and at
ten p. m. I start!"

"*Bon voyage!*" But the girl did not
turn around from the window.

"Good morning, Mrs. Carrington,
and good-by. If I don't see you again."
He shook her limp hand and walked
out of the room.

"This is dreadful!" wailed the
mother, when the front door had closed.

"Oh, he's such a—such a slacker!"
breathed the girl, still staring out of
the window. "He's got no thought in
his mind but his club and his clothes,
and his wonderful record as a moun-
tain climber, and his shots!"

"And you!" said Mrs. Carrington.

"I don't know where I come in and
that's a fact," said Miriam. "We be-
gan this yesterday. He resents my
suggesting that he should do anything.
We—don't—get—on, and that's the
whole truth."

"He's such a *nice* young fellow."

"Spoiled baby!"

"You're spoiled, Miriam!"

"I've more interest in the world than
he has. I don't want to be told how
lovely I am when I begin a serious con-
versation."

"Dear," hesitated the mother, "Guy
has so many men friends. Don't you

think he perhaps talks seriously enough to them, and wants—relaxation—when he comes to you?"

"If I am to be anything to any man, it must be something more than a relaxation!" Miriam raged.

"Well, I suppose it will all come right." Mrs. Carrington was not really optimistic.

"It won't, if it depends on *my* holding out any olive branch! I telephone, indeed! I see myself!"

She went up to her own room, and for a few minutes her mother sat in dumb misery, not knowing if interference would do any good and not knowing what form interference could take. But she had seen Guy's white face and set lips and felt very sure that he would keep his word. In that case, there would be Miriam's stormy grief to contend with. Mrs. Carrington, early left a widow, had had a hard time with her daughter!

Eleven o'clock struck, and then the telephone rang. Mrs. Carrington listened while the maid on the second floor answered the upstairs attachment.

"It's for you, ma'am."

She went quickly to the pretty Pekingese booth and shut the door.

"Mrs. Carrington?"

"Yes, Guy."

"Tell Miriam I've found something worth while to do—in China. Nothing but her *entreaty* would make me give it up."

"Oh, Guy! Come and talk it over with her!"

"Not I! The next move comes from her. Good-by."

The mother went up to her daughter's room—her nursery once—on the third floor.

"What he does is nothing to me, and I wouldn't call him to save my life!" was all the encouragement she received.

Miriam was lying on a couch. She had discarded her riding gear for a

pale-blue silk kimono. Her face had lost its roses, and her eyes were red.

In despair, her mother left her. Then, with a sudden inspiration, she sought the telephone booth again.

Mr. Anerley sat alone. His paper had fluttered to the ground. He was in such a fit of the blues as he had not known for a long time, less because he had no coffee, and because one nickel represented his funds until the day after to-morrow, than because these facts had such power to depress him.

"At sixty-three," he told himself, "not to have more stamina—more resistance!"

"Mr. An—er—ley!" called the maid, at the far end of the passage. "Telephone!"

"This is Dane, Sophia. Yes?"

"Oh, don't worry! They've quarreled before."

"China! To-night! Oh, that sounds more serious."

"I'll try, gladly. Yes, I may be able to think of something."

"Don't mention it, I beg of you. Cupid and cash! What a combination! No, let me work for love."

"Well, if you insist. But only in the event of my success. Good-by."

Half an hour later, Mr. Anerley ascended from the hole in the ground at Columbus Circle. Five minutes after that, he ascended the steps of Mrs. Carrington's house. She met him in the hall.

"Come in here, Dane." She led the way to the library. "This is very much the worst quarrel they've had yet. I'm afraid it will lead to a real breach. Anyhow, if he goes, Miriam will break her heart."

Mr. Anerley saw a box of cigarettes, and put out his hand rather eagerly.

"May I? One often sees more clearly through smoke. Thanks."

"It's a deadlock," went on his cousin. "Unless she telephones him before five o'clock, he will—I'm afraid he really will—get ready to go."

"Then the thing is to induce her to telephone."

"An utter impossibility. Unless you can say something——"

"I should like to speak to her," Mr. Anerley decided.

Mrs. Carrington led the way to her daughter's room.

"Miriam dear, Cousin Dane has just called. Won't you see him?"

The answer came, muffled, but definite:

"I wouldn't see the president."

Mr. Anerley stepped close to the door.

"Hello, little girl! Can't I come in?"

The answer came more softly:

"Not this morning, Cousin Dane."

"But, my dear——"

"Is this a free country?" came furiously from behind the door. "If it is, will you please go away? *Go—away!*"

Mr. Anerley turned to Mrs. Carrington, and spoke rather more loudly and distinctly than usual.

"She's right, poor girl! She should be let alone, Sophia. We should not intrude on her. Such grief as hers is sacred. A broken heart——"

The door was opened as suddenly as if in response to stage directions: "Open on 'heart.' Miriam appears." She did appear.

"My heart is not broken, Cousin Dane! How dare you say so? I'm—I'm perfectly *happy*! I rejoice that I have found out, in *time*——" She stopped, went back into her room, and shut the door on her joy.

"Do you know," called Mr. Anerley, "how many thousand miles it is from here to Shanghai?"

"The more, the better," was the muffled reply. "Go away."

"You don't really want Guy to go."

"He may go to he——"

"Miriam!" shrieked her mother.

"The Hellespont? He probably will," Mr. Anerley answered. "It's en route. Come, Sophia. She has enough to bear."

The door opened again.

"Mother," said Miriam, ignoring Dane, of whom usually she was very fond, "*please—understand*—that I'm not bearing anything! I wish you to see that we have tickets for the opera to-night. I intend to go."

The door was again shut—in their faces.

"Her pluck, her courage, are magnificent," said Mr. Anerley loudly. "I'll see about the tickets, Sophia. May I be your escort? She could do nothing better than this. He on his way to Shanghai—do people gossip about them? No. Not if she's at the opera! Splendid girl!"

Mrs. Carrington telephoned about the seats. This disappointed Mr. Anerley, who had hoped to leave a sum on deposit and secure breakfast somewhere on the way home. As it was, he asked for the use of the limousine.

One of his peculiarities was a difficulty so great as to be an impossibility when it came to asking a loan. A word from him, at any time, would have unloosened Cousin Sophia's narrow purse strings. It was never spoken. Other impossibilities made his life more sparse of comfort than it need have been. A reminder to his sister of the time when her George had postponed their long-delayed marriage for the third time, and Mr. Anerley had beggared himself to give her a dowry sufficiently attractive—such a reminder as this might have shamed her into a more generous allowance. Mr. Anerley would have starved before he uttered it. And yet, so scrupulous in



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will you please go away?
Go—away!"

petitions or reproaches, he was yet planning now to see what trick would avail to send Miriam to that telephone before five o'clock.

He was not acquainted, as it chanced, with Mr. Merritt, and he would have made no appeal to him if he had been. Mr. Anerley never used diplomacy with his own sex.

"What can I say? What will make her telephone?"

He enjoyed his drive in the limousine. He met one or two acquaintances,

to whom he bowed a trifle condescendingly. Little they guessed of his breakfastless condition. Little they knew that his soul cried aloud for coffee. And still less could they have imagined that this well-groomed gentleman, sitting so jauntily in a limousine, had literally not one penny in his pocket! Yet such things are possible—in Paris and New York, perhaps, more than in any other places on earth; New York and Paris, harbor of the gayest and most dauntless souls on earth!

At one o'clock, Mr. Anerley returned to the house on Fifth Avenue. Sophia would ask him to luncheon; not a doubt of that. Yet was he not consoled. He

wanted coffee, not food, and coffee came at the end of luncheon, not at its beginning.

And what the devil could he say to that girl?

"Did you see him, Dane?"

Mrs. Carrington met him in the hall with the question. He signed to her to precede him up the stairway.

"Ask again," he whispered, outside Miriam's door.

He felt old, and a little forlorn. His head ached. He thought savagely of

Miriam and Guy. The young *fools!* With all the world before them wherein to dine!

"Did you see Guy?" implored Mrs. Carrington. "What did he say?"

"Sophia"—Mr. Anerley felt his wits returning; his eyes grew bright—"I must ask you to go downstairs while I speak to Miriam. That poor young fellow's message is too intimate, too sacred, for any ears but hers."

The door opened abruptly. Miriam, dressed for the street, with a small bag in her hand, appeared on the threshold.

"Mother," she said firmly, though her face was very white under her veil, "I am going to Marcia Glenn's in Woodville. I must catch the one-fifty at the Pennsylvania depot. I'll wire you to-night—*when* the westbound express has started."

"You have chosen the wise and dignified course, Miriam," agreed Mr. Anerley.

But when Mrs. Carrington began to cry, and he looked at the girl's twisted lip, he forgot his hunger—and he realized his own skill. He had now all the spur he needed for success.

"I don't understand you, cousin," Miriam vouchsafed. "But will you kindly let me pass?"

"I will," replied Mr. Anerley, standing directly in front of her, "and I ask your permission to tell Guy Merritt that you refused to listen to his message—his confession."

"Confession?" Miriam said the word in astonishment, and then pulled herself together. "I don't want to hear it."

"I'm not really sure he meant me to tell you," said Mr. Anerley. "He really made it to me. He had, you see, to account—"

"He didn't have to! The matter rests between him and me!" Miriam cried impetuously.

"Certainly, and so I told him," agreed

Mr. Anerley. "But he knew that, as a man, I could understand."

"Come down with me, Cousin Dane," she interrupted, and led him to the library.

Mrs. Carrington followed, but waited hesitating in the hall until the library door closed in her face, when she retreated to the drawing-room in tears.

"I don't want to know one thing he said—but what was it?" Miriam demanded.

"In the first place," began Mr. Anerley, sitting down beside her, "he admits he is without excuse."

"Then why didn't he telephone to me?" she cried, a faint rose tingeing her white cheeks.

"He couldn't explain, over the wire, that he had been for some time trying to disgust you, could he?" inquired her cousin.

Miriam stared.

"What?" she cried.

"That was it," explained Mr. Anerley. "He didn't, my dear, at all desire to put you in the position of a jilted girl. He wanted you to break it off."

"Break—what?"

"Your engagement," said Mr. Anerley patiently.

Miriam rose and stared down at him. Then she backed into a big armchair facing him and sat grasping its arms.

"Break—our—engagement?"

"Yes, Miriam."

"Guy?"

"Mr. Merritt."

"But"—she almost whispered the words—"that's not—possible!"

"He feared you would think so," admitted Mr. Anerley mournfully. "Yet he said he hoped his *continual* disagreeing with you would show you that—that he did not find you congenial."

"Guy—said—that?"

"You see," her cousin went on, "he realized how admired, how sought after, you were. He knew that hardly

any one would believe that his affections had strayed—to another girl."

"Another girl? What are you talking about?" she cried.

"Oh, what is the use of beating about the bush?" Mr. Dane Anerley gave an excellent impersonation of a gentleman taking his courage in both his hands. "He has fallen in love, my dear, with a girl he met at some social-service stunt. Oh, *quite* lately," he added hastily. "He—he said, 'Miriam mustn't think I have been deceiving her. No! As soon as I realized that my feelings for her were not—what they had been, and that what I at first mistook for deep, deep admiration for a saintly life was really love—'"

"Saintly life!" cried the girl, again rising. "Who is she?"

"A missionary, my dear."

"What?"

"A young woman who is giving her life to spreading her own faith among poor, benighted heathen. She leaves to-night, for—for China, via California. That's what's distracted him so. You see, he's so afraid of some uprising. *You* know what the Chinese are? *Always* rising up over something or other. And he says she's so beautiful—"

"Beautiful," gasped Miriam.

"Yes. He wants you to see her, to meet her. Then, he says, you'd understand."

"The hypocrite!" gasped Miriam. "Chinese! Missionary! She's an adventuress, trying to ensnare a rich man!"

"Now, that's extraordinary!" cried Mr. Anerley. "I feel as if she were, too! In spite of all his rhapsodies—he's pretty hard hit, poor fellow—I had a kind of instinct that she wasn't really what he thought her! How," asked Mr. Dane Anerley earnestly, "how do you account for that?"

Miriam made no answer.

"But," her cousin went on, "I do not

advise you to see her, however much he wishes it. I do *not*!"

Miriam went to the door and opened it.

"Mother," she called imperiously.

Mrs. Carrington came, hurrying.

"Yes, my darling."

"Call up Guy Merritt at his club. Ask him to come here to dinner to-night, and bring— What is her name?" She flung the question over her shoulder at Mr. Anerley.

"Heloise Abelard." The words rushed from Mr. Anerley's lips, and he cursed his noninventiveness as soon as he had uttered them.

"—and bring Miss Abelard with him," concluded Miriam. "Tell him we should so like him to spend his last evening with us, and that I'm crazy to meet—*her*."

Mrs. Carrington turned helplessly to her cousin.

"Dane?" she implored. "What in the world—"

But Miriam had swept past her mother and gone to the telephone herself.

"I've done it," said Mr. Dane, full of uneasy triumph. "You see? It isn't two o'clock and she's telephoning to him."

They were both, one regrets to record, dishonorable enough to step cautiously near the telephone booth and listen!

"Is Mr. Merritt there?"

"That you, Guy? Mother and I wish you to dine with us to-night. Yes, we insist. We have to go on to the opera afterward, but we wish you to spend your last evening with us, of course. And don't come unless Miss Abelard can come, too. I'm crazy to meet her."

"What?"

"What?"

"Mr. Merritt! Do you dare imply——" Mr. Anerley was filled with dismay. "Do you think that I——"

"*Invent?* Invent what?"

"*No such person!* Guy, listen! What did you say? Guy! *Guy!*"

"What is she talking about?" whispered Mrs. Carrington, as Miriam jiggled the receiver frantically.

He shook his head. His heart was in his boots. The scheme was a failure and he betrayed as a schemer. Miriam and her lover were more permanently parted than ever, and coffee receded into the dim distance. Sophia would never, now, think to ask him to luncheon!

"Can't you get that number?" This from the booth. "Yes, yes. I want Mr. Merritt. What? Gone out? Where to? You don't know? How long ago? This very minute. Oh, *good-by!*"

She came out. Mr. Anerley shrank from her first glance.

"He denied it," she said tonelessly. "He accused me of a vulgar excuse for a quarrel."

"Oh, no," murmured Mr. Anerley faintly.

"Tell me again"—she laid an imperious hand on his arm—"every word he said. Tell me all over again."

For a minute Mr. Anerley brightened. He was not caught yet! He could still go on Munchausening! But to what end? Nothing, now, would bring Guy Merritt back. The headstrong young fool had gone out to buy his ticket. No, nothing could be done. He, Mr. Dane Anerley, might just as well confess the whole humiliating truth and be done with it. For once, lies, so often his way out of difficulties, had failed him!

"I don't"—Miriam spoke suddenly, after a brief silence—"believe one single word of the whole preposterous tale."

Mr. Anerley caught at the opening.

"In that case," he said, with dignity, "I may as well say good morning."

"Oh, Cousin Dane!" She caught his hand. "I didn't mean *that!*" She was suddenly her own sweet self to him. "I mean, he made that senseless rigmarole up, hoping you'd tell me. Don't you see?"

"You think so?" said her cousin dazedly.

"Yes. And to think I telephoned!" She flung him off and ran back to the library, to snatch at her bag. "Mother?"

"Yes, my pet," her long-suffering parent answered.

"I won't go to Woodville. I won't tell you where I'm going, but I'll let you know when he's safely started. Don't worry. *Don't cry!*"

"Oh, Miriam!" Mrs. Carrington broke down.

Not being a brute, Miriam could not leave her mother weeping. She stood consoling, promising. And while they stood thus, Guy Merritt dashed into the hall.

"Miriam," he cried, "I'm sure we got mixed up over that confounded telephone, anyway! What *did* you say?"

Mr. Dane Anerley, less than ten minutes later, having declined an invitation to luncheon, went straight to the Hariman National Bank, where he cashed a check presented to him by Mrs. Carrington. From there he went briskly to Delmonico's.

"Black coffee at once," he said, taking up the menu. "I'll study this while you get it."



Just a Plain Party

By Mary Patterson

Author of "The Poetry Party," "Trouble," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

More Pages from Anne's Diary.

FEBRUARY 20. Nothing.

February 21. Not a thing either.

February 22. Nothing but George Washington's birthday. There were not even lessons, but we went to school for a Martha Washington tea party Miss Stratton gave and to hear much talk about George Washington, the father of his country. I never did care much for his face and when I kept on looking at all of his pictures to-day I didn't feel any different about it—I only wondered more and more why he couldn't be more cheerful, or look pleasant at least for his pictures. You'd know he never would laugh out loud. Never, never. Or roar like father. Just that nearly smile and hardly that. You can tell he was opposed to laughing by his farewell address. *All* the solemn words in it and the way he used them! Just said them over and over and kept on even past the place when he said himself perhaps he ought to stop.

Of course I know he was a very good family and I wouldn't say this in school or any place except my thoughts that I can keep locked up in my desk, but what I like best about George Washington are his buckles and his monument. Of course I know he was very, very great because look at what the history says all the time about him. But when I look up at his monument I am sure he had to be very good if he expected to get all that especially on a

foggy day when it's as majestic and still and high as the benediction. And the buckles on his shoes are lovely.

And that story about the hatchet mind you. Miss Stratton laughed to-day when she said of course we all know *that* just as our mothers and grandmothers and great-great-grandmothers knew it before us and it contains a lesson for every gene-ration. Then I thought about it. There's an awful lot about that hatchet that nobody knows and I'll write some of my thoughts about it. If he *did* say I cannot tell a lie father I did it with my little hatchet it was a very soft thing to say. Perfectly squishy. If his father caught him doing it (I think he did, because probably the father was peeking around his orchard seeing what his little boy was doing) why then the thing he said was just pretending to be honest to get off. But nobody knows. And now since the monument no one will know.

And then I think it was perfectly stupid for George Washington to go at a cherry tree. A *cherry* tree mind you. Cherries are so lovely in blossom and so beautiful when they are ripe and are hanging like ruby ear-rings all over the tree. Besides they are perfectly delic-i-ous to eat and for George Washington, who was going to be the father of his country and have that monument, *de-lib-a-rately* to hack away at *that* tree even if his hatchet was new. Didn't he like cherry pie and want to

save the cherries for it? Why didn't he take a fence or that ugly old family coach or his mother's spinning wheel or his father's walking stick? When his father fussed he could have said the very same thing about I cannot tell a lie father I did it with my little hatchet and it would have made just as good a story for parents to tell their children. And schools too.

I don't suppose he knew many little girls when he was a boy. He wouldn't if he went around saying things like the hatchet conversation. They do say though that Martha Washington liked him very much, but I don't like that boudoir cap of hers. *Why* did she insist upon wearing it in her pictures. Or if she must wear it why didn't she put some little fluffy bows or rosebuds on it? Still she looks as if she could laugh any time she wanted to for she had what Miss Stratton calls a lurking smile though I think one that you can see and hear is much cheerfuller. Don't you. But Martha Washington had a parrot and it made her laugh every day, even when it was raining at Mt. Vernon.

P. S. I just remembered something. George Washington did dance once that I know about because I saw the house where they had the party. It was at the Carlyles and he danced the minuet with Sally Fairfax. *She* sounds pretty. Let us hope so. With fluffy skirts and darling slippers and rosebuds in her hair. Perhaps that evening George Washington smiled a whole smile. To be polite. For they do say he was the politest man in all the world. Then of course he'd have to smile at the party. I wonder if Sally liked to dance with him. Or if she kept on wishing some body would cut in. I wonder.

P. S. 2 I ran down stairs to ask father. He and mother were talking about the college poor little Cricket has to go to some day (after he can talk and walk by himself). They didn't

hear me at first because father wants him to be foot-ball and mother wants him to row a boat. Then mother said why Anne whatever are you thinking about *now* and father said say that again. So I said it. But father didn't answer my question. Or mother. Father just took me up on his lap and he said if I had been G. W. and Sally was anything like some one I know, and some one had tried to cut in on me, I would have broken up that party and thrown the meddling fella down into the Carlyle dungeon. But that wasn't the answer.

Father's a funny man. When I said it wasn't the answer he said it was one kind and much better than any mother could give and mother said don't you think it's nearly time for bed dear. But there is a dungeon under the Carlyle house. I saw it once. Do you suppose there was some one in the dungeon cell while they minueted at the party over his head? Oh my. What thoughts he must have had, and no place to write them down.

February 23. There is a mystery. Even father and mother have noticed it, and Julia and little Cricket if he could talk and Gusta. Gusta most of all because she said this afternoon why doesn't Mr. Sandy come around for some cake I never saw cake last as long as this before and sure enough. I looked in the cake box and there was more cake than there ever is after Sandy has been here once or twice. And Julia said where in the worlds Mr. Sandy Missanne do you suppose the poor boys sick or been killed or anything because I saw a lot of the Newmans out to-day and no Mr. Sandy.

Then father and mother wondered at dinner and mother called up Dr. Newman and he said that Sandy had been a little too free and easy with his fists since our party and he was doing pen-ance. Then mother said she hoped



the party wasn't the cause of the trouble and Dr. Newman said it was and then he and mother talked and laughed and laughed, so that father and I could hardly wait for mother to tell us.

Then mother said it's more about that poetry I had them write because Sandy and Gerry got in a quarrel about which one wrote the best and the quarrel grew bigger and bigger and the other boys took sides and finally the whole thing ended in trouble that left Gerry with a bad nose. Dr. Newman thinks Sandy's red head was to blame so he's keeping him in for a while.

P. S. I told Julia that they've locked Sandy up and she says she is going to walk past the school and see if it looks different or any—thing.

February 26. It does Julia says. She had Cricket out in his carriage this morning and went up past Newman's school and one window was different. She said there was a towel hanging out from it waving on a stick. And there were great big black inky letters on the towel. She *thinks* there were two S's and one O, only you can't make them spell anything. She *thinks* she heard a whistle. Anyway she walked slowly and looked back again and she *thinks* she saw Sandy's head at that window.

I asked her what made her think it was Sandy's own head and she said she would know it any place because it looked exactly like a copper kettle her mother used to have that she had to scour and I said that will do Julia. I told father and mother at dinner what Julia saw at the window and I asked father if Dr. Newman hung that flag out Sandy's window to make Sandy ashamed of himself. And father said he had an idea that the flag would be news to Dr. Newman but why did I think *he'd* stuck it out there and I said because didn't S O S mean Sandy O Sandy and father roared until he nearly woke up Cricket and mother said

hush hush and father said to me O no S O S is Mass-e-donian for Come over and help us and mother called him a miserable wretch and I knew she was pleased. So I was sick of the subject and I ate my salad.

But after dinner father pulled me down into his chair and he said now A O A come here and we'll talk about that S O S affair and he told me about it really and truly. But it is too long to write down in my thoughts. It's very strange though to think about words that can scream for help or anything else flying through the air. Without wings. Or voice. Just drawn. From here. To there. But I wonder what Sandy wanted help for. I asked father and he said Sandy probably wanted to be helped to Cake.

March 15th. Oh hum I've certainly had a very plain time. Chickenpox mind you. And I had to be kept away from everybody just when Sandy was let out of his dungeon cell. But he sent me a bag of gum drops and I ate them when the nurse was taking her fresh air and I found a letter in the bottom of the bag. It was the very first letter I ever got from Sandy in all of my life so I kept it and this is what he said. Dear Anne I waited and waited and waited for you to come from school to-day and the strain was waring me out so I ran all the way to your house and Gusta told me about your chickenpox which is sure some hard luck. Julia says you heard about how Doc Newman got fresh and locked me up all on account of that nut of a Gerry. After your party I coulndent let him out of my sight because everytime I was nt listening he swanked about his poetry and said he could write betteren anybody specially me. I told him it was n't so and I could prove it by anybody that could read and he brought it all on himself after I gave him fair warning. His nose is all right now but Doc Newman got awful sore,

and took it out on me. Yours til death Sandy.P.S. If you have any party when Trix comes cut the poetry. Just have a plain party because believe me you never can tell when poetry is going to make trouble.

That was Sandy's letter and then I got some from Trixy too because she is coming for the visit. But Trixy's letters all sound alike because she is so excited about coming and she says her parents keep her more excited telling her what not to do and what to do until she knows she will get them all mixed up. Her father is going to bring her but he is not stopping off. We are going to the train to meet her and Sandy is going too if they'll let him. Mother is so thankful that Cricket did n't get the chickenpox and spoil Trixy's visit and she does hope Emily has n't made Trixy a silk dress because my party dress is n't silk.

March 17th. Trixy is here and she is writing a letter home so I'll write my thoughts. She says she feels so loving to her dear parents and little baby brother when she is in a far distant city. Her father brought her. He is very nice and said to my father that he left her with fear and trembling but he could only hope for the best and then our two fathers laughed.

Trixy is just the same and I like her just the same. She is n't quite the same so far but she is getting ready to be when she is n't so afraid of forgetting some of the things her parents told her to do and not to do. I asked her if she had a silk dress and she said I don't know what I've got my dear I'm that mixed up with all this getting ready my dear I'll probably wear my party dress for breakfast my dear and curtsey to the baby instead of to your mother and her friends everytime I'm that mixed up. I told her that after a night's sleep and breakfast she'd probably not be so mixed and she said probably and she hoped so because it

was certainly disconcerting. She's got that word since I saw her. I've got to look it up.

P. S. Julia put out Trixy's things and her things are just about like mine. I told mother, and father said he was so thankful to have that awful suspense over with and mother just looked at him and tried not to smile and called him a miserable wretch and Trixy said she felt at home right away. I suppose because her parents have such strange pet names for each other too. That's another queer things about parents. They use a word just as they please but they make their children stick to the dictionary.

March 19th. Oh hum I cannot write my thoughts. I think I could if I knew just what they are but having Trixy for company all of the time makes me jump from one thought to the other before the first one is finished. We are driving or going to the matinee or doing something every minute and all of the time we talk but I can't remember what we say. We are going to have a party. Just a plain party. Mother calls it a little party over the telephone but it will be bigger than the poetry one because there are more children at home for Easter.

Trixy dances around all the time whenever we talk about it. And she keeps asking me every night if I think she's remembering all the things her father and mother told her to do and not to do and she says because my dear they will never let me come again if one little single thing goes wrong and I do want to come again for I never had such a good time in all of my life and I'd love to live here. But she's remembering.

She was nearly homesick only one night. That was when we had done too many things and were tired mother said, and Trixy wanted to see her little brother Thad. She says her baby brother and my baby brother are sweet

after you make yourself resigned about their being such little babies. After all boys have to be babies once. Mac Stowe and Billy Smith came to see Trixy and me today. Their mothers made them call and said they had to or they could n't come to the party. They waited at the corner until Catherine Stowe came from her music lesson and made her come with them. They gave her all the money they had. Mac wrote a promise on a piece of paper to give her the next ten cents he got and Billy gave her thirteen cents he had in his pocket so she came too. They tried to make Catherine promise to buy them caramels when she got all of the 23 cents and she would n't. But we had a very nice time and

Mac Stowe said it was worth the price of admission and Trixy said she never heard such a witty boy in all of her life.

March 26th. Maybe. I don't know. The days all jumped on to a merry-go-round I think because they were whirling. Father said he was almost dizzy himself with the good times we've been having and getting ready for the party, but mother said somebody ought to invent a way of having children's parties so it did n't kill the parents that gave the party. And father said he could give a party every day in the week without any trouble at all—just telephone and then sit down and read



She jumped out on her side and I jumped out on mine and we didn't speak. Just stared with all our might.

until the things came in and mother just looked at him in deep despair.

Trixy was very pretty at the party and everybody was pretty. The party was longer than the other one because father paid the music to keep playing after they wanted to stop. The very fat man with the very big fat violin wanted to stop anyway but father took him out and introduced him to Gusta and Gusta gave them all sandwiches and things, and Julia came down and they were n't so tired to go home right away after that. Trixy dances lovely and every single person liked my best friend. Sandy introduced Gerry to

Trixy before I could or mother or any one could. He said I want you t'meet m'friend Trix this is Mr. Gervase Gaunt Miss Beatrice Barclay he's passin' away to dance with you Trix.

Sandy and Gerry are at peace now and Gerry's nose is all well. Trixy was so excited to find out that Gerry's name is Gervase and she says it sounds like a gallant knight name where there is a moat and a drawbridge in the same story and she was going to call him Gervase all of the time instead of Gerry. She came whirling around and around up to me to tell me that right when I was being pleasant hostess and seeing that everybody was having a happy time, specially the ones who would n't have unless you were a pleasant hostess.

Mother says that is what makes parties even harder work after the party is all started, because you just have to make some people enjoy it whether they want to or not or are shy. Father said the only way to get around that was to take that kind of a bunch out and feed them and mother said no Anne must learn early to forget her own pleasure in looking after the ease of her guests and father said that was pretty hard on the kiddie if her guests did n't have sense enough to enjoy it and she could n't dance all she wanted to specially any one that danced as lovely and mother was in deep despare again, and father said *he* believed a party was for a good time even if they smashed a few things and it was not a place for the mental or social disipline of kiddies and mother just shook her head and said O you perfectly hopeless man, but I don't know what he was hopeless about.

He danced with Sally Farnum himself and then made Sandy and Mac. So then I did dance at lot more myself after father got Sally started which I simply could n't.

March 27. I did n't write down any

thoughts last night even though I had some more about parties. I was too sleepy. So was Trix. When we came upstairs we heard mother say to father they're just on the edge of things—they're tired out. But we were n't. We just could n't go to sleep even though we were sleepy. So I said lets make up some thoughts. And Trixy said what about I'm certainly not going to count sheep til I'm tired or count numbers I just hate mathematics and you know it. And I said Oh no lets make up something about fairies, and parties. And Trixy said you start and I said I supposed the reason fairies were always well and so good and happy was because they just lived on parties. Then I began to wonder where they get their music for the dancing and I asked Trixy. And she said O I don't know, let's think. Then she said I'll ask Gervase when he comes over with Sandy tomorrow and I said I'll ask Sandy. Then Trixy said the *very* idea as if that red-headed Sandy'd know anything about fairies and I said why could n't he know even if he was red-headed and she said the *very* idea and I did n't like the way she kept saying *very* idea and then we jumped out of bed. She jumped out on her side and I jumped out on mine and we did n't speak. Just stared with all our might. Then mother called up Oh little girls don't talk any more but go right to sleep. Then I remembered she was company and she remembered she was a visitor and she said *don't* let me flare up my dear or they'll never let me come again and we got back into bed and that was the end of that. And I said we'll just settle the music for the fairy dances ourselves and she said indeed we will. So we thought awhile. And I said maybe they coaxed a little soft wind to play on the strings of the cobwebs stretched over the roses and I asked Trixy did she think so. But Trixy was asleep. So I went too.

"This Is New York"

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "The Watchdog," "Mutiny," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

A vivid, human story of a small-town girl in the Big City.
A story for all those to whom its title is still a magic phrase.

AND so I went to Mr. Enwright," Bennet was saying. "I told him I was sure our factory could 'come back' big if I had just a little more capital to put into it. I told him I'd go at it with all the energy I've got. I told him father's long illness and old-fashioned methods were the real causes of its getting behind so. I told him I sort of hoped that he, as father's old friend, might be willing——" He broke off with a shrug and a half smile.

"What did he say?" asked Nan. She had already guessed the answer.

"Oh, he said a lot of things. Said he feared my faith in the old business was a sentimental one. Said he wouldn't feel justified in putting money in a dead concern like that. Said he was sorry to refuse me. Ended by saying, 'Sentiment is all very well, my boy, but this is New York, you know.' " The young man made a little gesture that seemed to say, "There you have it!" "I went to a couple of other men, and both of them said practically the same thing: 'See here, young man, this is *New York*. Come here when you've got a *live* proposition.' So it's no use. I'm going home this afternoon."

"I'm sorry," said Nan.

She felt his wistful eyes on her and she did not dare meet them, lest he should read her own bitter disappointment. She knew now that all the time she had been counting on Bennet, had

all the time been like a little craft cruising gayly about knowing that there was safe anchorage near when the sky darkened and wind and waves began to rise.

If he had obtained this loan, a chance to rehabilitate the business he felt bound to, she had thought he meant to speak. Now perhaps he felt he had no right to speak, when the future was so uncertain—or else perhaps, after all, he hadn't really cared. And pride forbade her to let him know her own defeat.

"You're not ready to come home yet, I suppose?" The wistfulness was in his voice now.

"Not yet."

She shook her head, smiling. It was an enigmatic smile. He thought it meant that she was not ready to leave so full a life for the humdrum ways of Andersville. She had been, of course, very careful to keep Andersville informed of her triumphs.

He sighed.

"Well, I guess I'll have to go back and see what work can do." He hesitated. "You're—all right?"

She knew he meant money.

"Oh, quite—quite all right," she answered lightly. "You can see I'm not living beyond my means." She indicated the dingy boarding-house parlor in which they sat. Then, seeing the doubt in his eyes: "Oh, it's really not so bad here. My room's nice and

sunny. All these old houses look sort of dreary, but—it's New York, you know."

"I'm glad that's still a magic phrase for you," he said. "Well, I must be going, Nan."

He rose and put out his hand. Words seemed to fail them both as their hands clasped. He longed to cry: "Come with me!" She longed to whisper: "Oh, take me with you!" But neither spoke their yearning. They murmured commonplaces—"Good luck—and write me some time." "Let me know how you're making it." "Good luck again—and good-by."

Nan, from behind the curtain, watched him swing off down the street, hat pulled down a little over his eyes, but no droop in the broad shoulders. Her throat ached. And then he was gone out of her sight. She went slowly upstairs to her own room as a castaway turns back to his cave when the ship that might have rescued has vanished unheeding into the sunset.

Nan was the five-hundred-and-sixty-nine-thousand-eight-hundred-and-forty-second girl—approximately—to come to New York "with a voice" plus a few hundred dollars. Her illusions and her money had lasted just about the usual length of time; in fact, her case was so true to the usual form that, instead of admitting defeat and going wisely back home to Andersville, pride refused to surrender and she joined the army of trying-to-be's who throng the big city.

Standing in her little room, with its faded green carpet, its dresser and couch bed and two chairs, Nan could not but wonder why it was easier to stay here than to go home and say calmly to grinning Andersville:

"I didn't make good, and I've simply come back."

It might be easier to stay, but was it possible? Not unless she found some work to do, some way to make a living.

There was exactly three dollars and sixty cents in her purse. She shivered.

Some one knocked, and a high, clear voice demanded:

"Can I come in?"

"Come," said Nan.

She turned to her mirror and dabbed at her hair, masking her face from the curious gaze of Estelle Easton, who entered breezily.

In her home town, the latter had signed herself "Estelle E. Jones," and her hair had been about seven shades darker. Now, in addition to being tall and willowy, she was golden-haired Estelle Easton. Time—and New York—doth work changes in us all. Estelle was generally a show girl in the winter and a model in some wholesale gown house in the summer. Her room was just across the hall from Nan's, and propinquity had gradually resulted in a sort of friendship between them. Estelle kept herself carefully "toned down" and put on her "one-of-Lady-Gay's-friends" manner—second act of "On Her Way"—when in Nan's company.

"S he gone?" inquired Estelle in a hushed tone, as if she might be heard in the parlor three flights down.

"Yes."

"Home?"

"Yes."

"Andersville?"

"Yes," once more from Nan.

"Sounds like one of those towns," said Estelle dreamily. "Aw, why didn't you go with him?"

"And give up my career?" said Nan dryly.

Estelle giggled.

"Listen, kid, aren't you cured yet? You know I had that bug once myself."

"Are you cured?" asked Nan.

"Am I cured! You don't see any eight sheets with Estelle Easton on 'em, do you? Oh, I'm cured all right.



"So it's no use. I'm going home this afternoon."

Little old New York jolted me out of dreamland pretty quick, believe me! I hadn't any more than lisped, 'So this is New York!' until the landlady was hanging onto my trunk with one hand and setting my hand bag out on the front porch with the other. I wasn't wearing a petticoat, and it was fashionable to be fluffy then, too. I was wearing a piece of pasteboard in my shoe, though, to keep my rosy foot off Fifth Avenue, while I watched Mrs. Van As-torbilt motoring down to Sherry's. Chasing three meals a day kind of took my mind off my career. Another one

of these mind cures, that was. 'Them was the happy days!'" She yawned.

"Why didn't you—go home?" asked Nan slowly.

"Me? Oh, I don't know. Sailed away with too many flags flying, I guess. And then there wasn't anybody special—none of that light-in-the-window business. But, look here——"

"Do you know where I could get—a job, Estelle?" Nan put in abruptly.

Estelle looked at her and shrugged.

"Oh, well, if that's the way you feel about it. Yep, I can get you a job—right on the next hook to mine."

"You mean—a model?"

Estelle nodded. "Weinburg & Block, Gowns. You're a perfect thirty-six, with peachy shoulders. Want to try it?"

Nan hesitated. Something within her shrank. Estelle was a likable sort, but Nan did not wish to become one of her class. It seemed such a long step down from that star to which she had once thought her wagon firmly hitched. She felt the repugnance of one who stands beside a dirty stream that must be crossed by wading.

"You might try the Winter Garden chorus," suggested Estelle. "You've got a figure and enough voice."

"No, no," said Nan hastily. "I'd rather be a model."

She would have to swallow some of this pride, she told herself, some of this pride that couldn't bear to go back to Andersville, and yet—

"All right," said Estelle. "I can get you in. About twelve a week, I guess. And, look here, don't be too squeamish. This is New York, you know."

Introduced by Estelle, Nan had no difficulty in becoming a gown model for Weinburg & Block. In a long dressing room, she became one of half a dozen girls in pink silk "slips," who spent the day getting into a gown, going out into the gray-and-rose show-room, and parading before little booths in which sat buyers, male and female, from Maine to California and from Texas to Michigan, and then going back and getting into another gown—repeat *ad infinitum*. Each model, as she approached her audience, stated the price of the creation she was displaying. If interested, the buyer inspected it more closely; if not, the model was dismissed with a shrug or an uncomplimentary adjective.

Nan made a very satisfactory model. She possessed not only a good figure, but "style" also; unconsciously she wore the gowns with an air. The slight

embarrassment she felt at first soon disappeared in the matter-of-fact atmosphere of the place, although she continued to feel as if she were moving about in a trance.

The other models were mostly self-made blondes of sophisticated countenance and conversation.

"Look here, girls," said Estelle at one point, "take a little of the edge off your chatter. My friend, here's, got feelings."

"Where you from?" inquired the lone brunette, with no thought of irony. She grinned cheerfully, if blankly, when Nan laughed back, "Andersville."

It was not until she had been there some time that Nan began to notice Nathan Block particularly, or to notice that he was noticing her. Then it dawned upon her that he always watched her instead of the gown she was exhibiting.

Nathan Block was the junior partner, about thirty-five years old and an entirely different type of Jew from the loud, hook-nosed, and arrogant Weinburg. Nathan was small and dapper and soft-voiced. His clothes were ultrafashionable and he wore a diamond in his tie and on his little finger. His fine car, with its natty chauffeur, was often waiting for him when Nan went home. She began to be a little interested in him, womanlike, because he looked at her that way, without making any advances.

She was sick of "advances." Hardly a day passed without her declining invitations from masculine buyers who wanted to take a pretty girl out to dinner and the theater. They were far from home, and their freedom seemed to go rather too frequently and dizzily to their heads. She generally pleaded a previous engagement, evading them as gently as possible, for these gentlemen must not be offended.

"Look here," said the puzzled Estelle. "Why don't you let some of

these see-the-town boys buy you a dinner and take you to a show? What's there in this sitting at home by yourself every night? Looks like a thin time to me."

"I don't seem to care much for the gentlemen who ask me out," smiled Nan.

"Oh, you're too particular. Care for 'em! Well, I haven't seen more'n six men in seven years who didn't carry seven-eighths of their weight from the neck up—solid ivory, I'm tellin' you! But as long as he can feel his way into his pocket, what do you care about his bread-pudding brains?"

"It isn't brains so much— Oh, run along with Jakey," laughed Nan. "Don't bother about me. I'm all right."

But she was not all right. When the door closed behind Estelle, Nan threw herself on her bed; slow tears crept from beneath her closed lids; loneliness and despair clasped her close. There had been something like panic in her snatching of the "job" at Weinburg & Block's, and while she had been outwardly calm and cheerful since, a desperate depression had been gnawing within. Was this to be the end of all her fine dreams—these associations, this poverty, this environment? She so longed for the refinements of life, for the companionship of the well bred, the people who know things, who do things. Why had she wasted her little patrimony on *art*—on trying to be something she couldn't be? If she had only learned something practical!

But she was here. Suddenly she sat up and dashed away her tears. She was here, and what good did it do to act like this? Estelle was right. Why not play the game? She must have something to take her out of herself. After all, this was New York, not Andersville, and being a prim little village girl did not get you anywhere in New York. It was characteristic that she did not consider ways to learn that

something practical *now*—did not remember that it is not impossible to start afresh.

The next day she dined at Churchill's with Mr. S. Goldstone of Portland, Oregon. Lights, music, the atmosphere of gayety, the feeling of being a part of "metropolitan life" excited the lonely girl, lifted her, as she had wished, out of herself. Starved for pleasure as she was, even Mr. Goldstone could not spoil the novel evening. She tried not to mind him, to put up with him cheerfully, as the price of admittance.

Mr. Goldstone was not bad looking, but his conversational limitations were clearly defined. He said: "Ain't you the funny kid, though?" and, "What makes you so shy, sister?" with frequent sallies about "chickens," which he regarded as humor of a high order.

He admitted that he couldn't make Nan out; she was too many for *him*! And when she preferred not to kiss him good night, he was aggrieved.

"Ain't you had a good time?" he inquired accusingly.

Nan fled to her room loathing him. Her cheeks were still flushed and her eyes too bright, but her excitement had dropped from her like a cloak. She felt humiliated, smirched.

All the next day she kept wondering if she was beginning to look and act like the girls with whom she spent her days, wondered if she was beginning to walk across the showroom with the same swagger, the same hippy prance. She observed that she was no longer conscious of her bare arms and shoulders. She did not notice, as she had at first, the gowns that were cut extremely low.

But there had been something insidious about last night's excitement, like the first dose of certain drugs. Her pleasure had not been unalloyed, truly; still, all these men could not be like



The slight embarrassment she felt at first soon disappeared in the matter-of-fact atmosphere of the place.

Goldstone, and at least she had not been alone with her unrest and her regrets.

She came out upon the sidewalk in the autumn dusk rather disconsolately. Nathan Block's car was at the curb. Nathan himself was just turning from a passing acquaintance to enter it when he saw Nan.

He turned to her, lifting his hat.

"Let me take you home," he said in a friendly way.

Nan hardly hesitated.

"Oh, thank you! That will be fine!"

In a moment, she was whirling up the avenue luxuriously, the smiling Nathan beside her.

"Where would you like to dine?" he asked.

"Oh, we're not going to dine!" cried Nan, glancing at him in her half-shy way. "You're just going to set me down at home."

"Won't you dine with me?" he urged softly. "Of course you will. Why not?"

"It's awfully kind of you, Mr. Block, but—but I shouldn't."

"I don't see why. I'll take good care of you. Let's be friends. Won't you be friends?" He put out his hand.

"Why—why, yes, of course."

She let him take hers. His touch

was not distasteful. She looked down curiously at his white, manicured hand, not much larger than her own, with the onyx-set diamond on his little finger. His manner was quiet and gentlemanly; he could make things very pleasant for her. Wouldn't Estelle stare if she could see her now? She felt decidedly pleased with the turn of events.

Dinner and the theater followed, with no bad after taste this time. The shining gilt-and-glass restaurant, the deference of the waiters—"Yes, Mr. Block," and, "This way, Mr. Block"—his easy way of doing things, the car rolling up for them afterward—all this gave her a feeling of elation, of being somebody; that was very soothing to her recently much-wounded vanity.

She did not, however, expect it to happen again, or at least not frequently, so she was surprised to find him apparently waiting for her the next night.

"Oh, not again!" she laughed, trying not to notice the warmth in his brown eyes.

Though she protested a little, she did not refuse to enter the car. Again they dined sumptuously, but she was a little conscious this time of the shabbiness of her blue suit. On the way home, he began to question her about what notable cafés she would like to visit, what plays she would like to see.

"Really, I mustn't go again," she said pensively.

"You don't enjoy it?"

"Enjoy it! I love it. But—I— People will wonder who your shabby little friend is—"

"You look good to me," Nathan declared.

"Thank you, but I—"

"And I a maker of gowns!" cried Nathan. "It's absurd, isn't it? Tomorrow you must pick out what you like, Miss Nan—"

Nan was horrified.

8

"Oh, Mr. Block, I couldn't do that!"

Did he think she had meant to— Her cheeks began to burn; she looked at him with big, startled eyes.

"Is it so terrible?" he smiled. "What is a gown to me? It is nothing. I see you are different from most girls, Miss Nan—but this is New York, you know. You will allow me?"

"No, no! Certainly not! Please don't think of it. I'm sorry I—" She broke off, very much upset.

She did not see him the next day, and the big gray car was not waiting when she started home at night. She did not know whether she was relieved or disappointed.

The first thing she saw when she opened her door was a big suit box on a chair. She told herself that she must not even open it, but she could not resist doing so. Of course, she would not keep them—she would send them back—but surely there was no harm in peeping. She found a very charming dinner dress, not too elaborate, youthful and in good taste, and a suitable wrap. Suitable! An inadequate word to describe its quiet richness, its smartness.

The flesh was weak, and in five minutes Nan beheld a shining-eyed vision in her mirror. How these beautiful things enhanced her! She had not known how pretty she could be! True, she spent her days gorgeously arrayed, but she regarded the Weinburg & Block gowns impersonally, in a detached sort of way, as things not really concerning her.

Naturally she did not have to guess the sender, in spite of the absent card. Of course, it was out of the question to keep them, however much she might wish to. She hoped Nathan would not be offended. He must see her position. It was nice of him. He had been most kind to her—and in such a nice way. After all, he was different. She really liked him.

The housemaid's voice shrilled from the stairs:

"Miss Lloyd! Mr. Block calling! Miss Llo-oyd!"

Nan answered:

"Yes. I'll be down."

For a moment, she stood motionless. Something urged her to snatch off the gown; something restrained her from doing so. She had no intention, of course, of accepting such a gift from Nathan Block, yet even as she thought this, she moved as if hypnotized toward the stairs.

Nathan himself was in evening dress. He reminded one of a gentleman doll—he was so little, so dapper; there was even something waxen in his smooth face in which his brown eyes glowed at Nan.

"You look grand," he said delightfully. "Swell! I have got good taste, yes? I could see how your eyes would look in that soft gray."

He did not try to come near her. He stood very quietly, like a small boy who wants the fluttery little bird to come closer, so he can put the salt in his grimy hand on its tail. It isn't fair, though, to speak so of Nathan's soft, white hands.

"I'm not going to keep it, of course," Nan fluttered. "I just put it on—it was so sweet—I couldn't help putting it on—"

"Of course, you must keep it. Don't think about me. You have simply a new dress. You are beautiful in it. Ah, you look fine—you look like New York! Come on—let's go. Let's show them—"

"Oh, no, no! Mr. Block, really—I shouldn't—"

"Oh, yes, yes! Where's the harm? Who knows? Aren't we friends?"

"Yes—but—"

But presently they were in the big gray car going to Sherry's.

It was done. There was no use returning the gift after that. Nan could

not imagine how she had come to do such a thing. She waked in the night to wonder how it had happened.

It seemed to make no difference in Nathan's attitude. He was just the same—gentle, friendly, admiring, perhaps just a trifle more devoted. Three or four times a week, she dined and danced or went to the theater with him. These pleasures seemed to Nan to have become a necessity to her. The other nights she was so tired that she fell asleep the moment she went to bed and so did not have to think—to think about herself—and Bennet; Bennet, who, after all, had never cared. She did not know why she had thought he cared—he had not said so; and now he wrote just little notes and she sent back just casual little notes.

Estelle came in frequently and talked about Nathan—how much money he had, and what a little prince he was, and wasn't Nan the sly one, laying low until she'd hooked a big one? And didn't she cut a swath flying around in Nathan's car and shining around among all the bright lights. And Nathan could just hang a girl with diamonds if he wanted to, and so on.

And then Nathan asked her to be his wife.

"Marry me, Nan. I'm crazy about you—you know that. What do you say, little girl?"

"I—I don't know, Nathan."

She looked at him, half frightened. It was true that she did not know what to say.

"I will make you happy," Nathan promised. "I will give you everything. A girl like you shouldn't be living like this. A model—that is not right for you. And this house—you can't be happy here. We'll have an apartment on Riverside Drive. Or, if you like a house, I know of one on West End Avenue. Such a house! You shall have a little car of your own—you would like that, eh? What do you



He turned to her, lifting his hat. "Let me take you home," he said in a friendly way.

say?" He leaned toward her, moistening his lips, his brown eyes very soft and eager.

Nan listened, twisting her cold hands. She felt as if she had run into a blind alley and now stood defenseless, back to the wall. In a flash of perception, she understood her own weakness. She could not fight her own battles—she could not be independent. When she had failed to do what she had set out to do, she had not gone on fighting. She had not faced about, either, and sought some other goal within her

reach. She had simply let go—surrendered—let circumstances do with her as they would. She had sought diversion to keep her from seeing where she was going.

Where was she going? What would become of her in this great, pitiless city that did not care what became of any one? She longed desperately for safety, for protection. If she sent Nathan away, she would be left alone again, poor, rudderless— And Nathan would be good to her—could give her everything—loved her. This came to

her in a second—the epitome of all that thinking she had been at such pains to avoid.

Nathan had waited patiently.

"Nan," he whispered, "you shall have everything! I'll take good care of you—such good care! No more of this. Nan—Nan——" He held out his hands.

Like an automaton, Nan put hers into them. Body and mind were strangely numb. His glad cry seemed to come like a far echo, his eager arms to clasp a statue.

Nathan wished to be married at once, but agreed upon a date just one month away. Yielding reluctantly to his wish, Nan stopped work. The great solitaire on her finger made a complacent landlady and an enthusiastic Estelle.

"Think of your catching *Nathan*! Ain't he a nice boy, too? Listen, I think I ought to have a commission."

"You should," Nan agreed, with the assumed lightness that covered an ache she did not wholly understand.

"Say, dearie, Keltner's going to leave the first of the year. If I couldn't give her cards and spades on managing a showroom! Say, will you speak to Nathan about me? Just mention it kind of casual—you know. Will you?"

"Sure I will," promised Nan in the vernacular.

Nathan was amazingly tactful. Perhaps some instinct warned him to be gentle, not to seize her with any show of possession. He brought her many beautiful presents which she would sit staring at listlessly. Her eyes had an absent look; she seemed always to be thinking of something else. She was thinking of Bennet Coleman. Not thinking of him, either—her mind seemed oddly blank—but seeing him, seeing his face as he had looked one Sunday morning when they had walked home from church together—in Andersville. The little town had been so clean and green and peaceful. Roses

had climbed over cozy little houses, cherries had hung red in fragrant orchards, and she had been dreaming and planning and wishing for—New York.

She had not even written to her aunt in Andersville, her one relative, of her approaching marriage—yet. That marriage was only ten days away when she did write just a few lines and, "I am going to be married to Nathan Block, of New York." She wondered if Aunt Nell would tell—Bennet.

It was the night of the third day after, and Nan was climbing the stairs to her own room—Nathan had just gone—when the bell rang sharply. Sleepy Katie, stumbling up from the kitchen, opened the door, and Nan's heart stood still at the sound of a voice: "I must see Miss Lloyd. Is she in?"

"I guess so," said Katie. "I think she just went upstairs. I'll call her."

Nan appeared at the top of the stairs.

"I am here," she said, and slowly descended.

Bennet stood there looking up at her. He did not speak.

"Bennet," she whispered. Her lips were stiff.

He held out his arms and she, like a sleepwalker, went into them. It was as if he had returned from shipwreck after she had thought him dead. He held her tight, his cheek against hers. For a long time they stood so in the drafty hall under a flickering gas jet.

At last she drew away and motioned him into the parlor. Nathan's ring flashed on the hand with which she turned up the gas. But Bennet's face was only tender now with the relief of one who has arrived in time.

"Nan, I love you. You know I've always loved you, and you—you came to me just now." He pointed to the ring. "What does that mean?"

She lifted a hand to her forehead as if bewildered.

"I thought you—didn't care much——" she stammered. "And I——"

Oh, Bennet, I didn't want to tell you then, but—but I was beaten. I thought I could be a great singer and I can't. I'm not brave like other girls. I couldn't go on fighting. I was afraid. My money was gone—and then——"

"What?" His tone was tender with understanding.

"He came." Her voice died away.

"Nathan Block," said Bennet thoughtfully. "Was that his car that went as I came?"

"Yes."

"He's rich, I suppose."

She nodded.

"And he took you about in that fine car and gave you fine presents——"

She nodded again, the tears wet on her pale cheeks.

"Did you learn to love him?"

"No."

"Nan, I'm poor. I'm working hard to make a go of the old factory, but I don't know how it will turn out. I thought you were doing fine here. I didn't want to be selfish. Nan, do you care for me?"

"Yes," she whispered through her tears.

"Then will you come home with me to Andersville and be poor and happy? I couldn't give you up, Nan. I knew there must be some mistake—— Nan, will you come?"

She came to his arms. And Na-

than's ring, souvenir of New York, still glittered forgotten on her finger.

The next morning Nathan came promptly at her summons, little and dapper and smiling as ever. He grew grave quickly enough when Nan held out his ring.

Meekly she faltered her story. It had all been a mistake. She had been weak and cowardly and lonely. Oh, she was so terribly sorry—but she couldn't marry him now. Could he forgive her, know that she had not meant to hurt him?

"It is some one else?" he asked.

She nodded.

"Some one I've known a long time."

"Some one from the little town, eh?" sighed Nathan.

"Yes."

"Well—I knew you didn't love me, Nan—but I hoped. That is not your fault, is it? So there's nothing to forgive. I wish you would keep those little trinkets. No? As you like, then. But this young man, this young man from the little town, he must be very good to you or—— You won't go away thinking we are all so bad in New York, eh? Good-by, little girl."

Through her tears, she watched him get into the fine, big gray car, his elegant little figure relaxing listlessly against the leather cushions, the bright morning sun catching the diamond on his little finger. He did not look back.

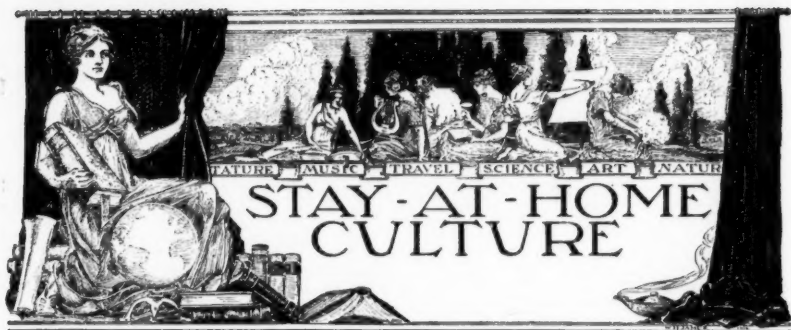
A GOOD PROVIDER

THE popular young professor at Vassar had fallen on the ice and broken his ankle. The girls of his freshman history class wished to express their sympathy, so they took up a dime collection and gave it to the next girl who was going to New York, with instructions to buy something for Professor ——.

She was not very domestic, but she knew that strawberries in February were a luxury, so she walked into the first store where they were displayed and laid her money on the counter.

"Send as many strawberries as that will buy," she ordered, giving the address.

And the next morning the heart of one young man was gladdened by the appearance at his bedside of twelve quarts of strawberries!



Conducted by D. E. Wheeler

A richer and fuller life, greater attractiveness and charm, are the gifts that culture brings to a woman. But what chance for self-culture has the home woman of limited means? Must she forego the benefits of travel, of hearing the best music, of seeing the best in art, of knowing the greatest books, and keeping in touch with what the great world is doing and thinking?

We hope this new department will help to solve the problem for many such women.

On Writing a Letter

CORRECT use of the English language, spoken and written, is one of the chief ends of public schooling, but the methods of instruction, as a rule, do not attract the student and leave him or her indifferent, even ignorant. In school or out, however, from the way the majority of us treat our mother tongue, one would suppose it was really our stepmother tongue, that we had no blood relation with it and little love for its power and beauty.

Particularly is this true when we put pen to paper and attempt to express ourselves. Though we may talk interestingly, and gain reputation for charm and range in conversation, yet a pen may paralyze our resources of speech. With it in hand, we falter, grow dull-witted; we are self-conscious, stilted; we become pompous, silly. We are utterly unlike Goldsmith, the genial Oliver of whom David Garrick said: "He wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

Why is it that we suffer this singular metamorphosis?

EARLY AVERSION TO GRAMMAR.

As already intimated, the hiatus between the spoken and the written word begins in our school days. Unless we were endowed naturally with an ability to write, it is not likely that our youthful exercises in grammar and composition were calculated to inspire us with either the desire or the purpose to express ourselves well in written language. Parts of speech, syntax, and parsing we doubtless regarded as supremely stupid. For some strange reason, the youth of the land do not like their own language work as much as other subjects. Whether this is the fault of pedagogics or not, the fact remains; and there are annually turned out university graduates whose knowledge of composition is puerile, though otherwise they are accomplished scholars. In this they resemble the young man in one of James Payn's novels,

"whose education had been classical, and did not, therefore, include spelling."

WOMEN AND LANGUAGE.

Fortunately, many women are born with an instinct for language, and not even lack of educational training can hamper them in achieving a certain command of their native speech. Speaking in general, women are better story-tellers than men, and they are far better writers of letters. De Quincey, the British author, whose command of language was extraordinary, said that it was in the letters of cultivated women that pure, idiomatic English survives. And, by the way, that word "idiomatic" covers much that is essential in the art of letter writing.

A letter ought to contain a great deal that serves to make conversation interesting and vital. It should give the impression of being unstudied, offhand. Spontaneity invests it with a magnetic quality never attained by the precise and proper air. Which does not mean that we sanction ungrammatical and slipshod phraseology, but rather that we encourage the colloquial spirit.

THE SPIRIT OF A GOOD LETTER.

Beware of "bookish" language in your epistles. Cultivate *living* rather than *literary* English. Sacrifice elegant and flowery expressions to clearness and simplicity. Do not be too exact in the choice of words you employ. Let your sentences end with prepositions if that seems the natural construction. Affect no contempt of so-called common language. Well-bred people never avoid brief, simple, ordinary words. Above all else, remember that "frigid correctness is the bane of all art." The late Robert Grant once happily embodied this idea in verse, which he called "Inmodesty":

I am a modest little maid,
Who thinks it more polite
To bid a man "good evening"
Than bid a man "good night."
And when the human members
Are spoken of by him,
I always call what doctors call
A "leg" a "lower limb."

I am a modest little maid,
Who never "goes to bed;"
But to my chamber "I retire"
Most properly, instead.
And when the chaste Aurora
Unseals my sleepy eyes,
The act which some call "getting up"
I designate "to rise."

I never speak of feeling "sick,"
But always say I'm "ill;"
And being in my dressing gown
I style "*en dishabille*."
In fact, I always hesitate
To call a spade a spade,
Because, you see, I try to be
A modest little maid.

While it is the part of wisdom to shun being either a purist or a pedant, it is equally important to observe and practice the mechanics of good letter writing, as well as its tacit rules of etiquette. Some of the essential points we will outline in brief.

POINTS TO REMEMBER.

One of the first and foremost commandments is: Write legibly at all times, and especially to strangers who are not familiar with your chirography.

Comprehend clearly in your own mind what you intend to say before beginning to write; marshaling your budget of news need not impede your spontaneity.

Use black ink, or blue black, in preference to colored fluids, and never send a letter in pencil unless circumstances compel it. Then be sure to explain your reason to your correspondent.

Your stationery should be of the best quality that you can afford. Wide range in tint is allowable provided it is

delicate in tone. Bizarre effects in note paper are not approved.

Always date your letters, and include your address; also inscribe your name and address on the envelope in case of nondelivery of the missive.

Paragraph freely in your composition, and make your paragraphs short. Care in paragraphing will facilitate the reader in getting the sense of your communication, and will also save time in perusal.

Sentences should each contain but one proposition.

Do not indulge in long letters. The letter of sixteen closely written pages is no longer esteemed as in the olden days when correspondence was necessarily at long intervals, and people saw one another less frequently.

Correct spelling is indispensable. No excuse is allowed for misspelling in these days, when dictionaries abound in every size and shape—even for the vest pocket—and are cheap enough for the poorest purse.

"HELPS" TO CORRECT EXPRESSION.

Good grammar should be sought after, though you are idiomatic and colloquial to a degree. English has been called a grammarless tongue, but this is only a half truth. Rules of syntax in our language are astonishingly simple when compared with other tongues. There are a few helpful hints that will assist you in gaining correct usage of English. For one thing, study your pronouns. For another, learn to couple singulars with singulars and plurals with plurals. Thus, do not say or write, "*Those kind of people.*" Learn the distinction between "*shall*" and "*will.*" And put verbs referring to the same time in the same tense. Watch out for the bothersome prepositions. Be on the alert, too, for the insidious split infinitive, though there are some cases when it is better split.

PUNCTUATION.

Punctuation bewilders many, even professional writers, but it is not really as cryptic as it seems. The purposes of the period are well known. It is the various uses of the comma that confuse; therefore, master your comma and most of your punctuation difficulty vanishes. Colon and semicolon subtleties need not worry the average correspondent.

Take care that you do not load your letter with adjectives. They seem to be a weakness of the feminine mind. Superlatives add no strength to your expression. A girl might win a unique place among her correspondents by being stingy with adjectives, for the practice would be uncommon.

By the same token, avoid underscoring your words; such emphasis is effective only when sparingly employed.

With adjectives and underscoring we would put the use of unusual words and foreign phrases. All savor of affectation.

Make it a habit to read over what you have written before trusting the letter to the post, and endeavor to examine it critically, for a written expression will often suffer misinterpretation where a spoken one would cause no criticism.

Never write an angry or an impolite letter.

Finally, choose short words rather than long ones, familiar words rather than unfamiliar, and always remember that a meager vocabulary is no drawback to a sincere and thoroughly enjoyable letter.

IMPORTANCE OF THE BUSINESS LETTER.

All of the above points are set down without any pretense at covering the subject, which is one of wide and mooted dimensions. Our object is merely to drop hints and not offer instruction. Yet, before quitting our random advices, we feel that we ought to

give space to the growing importance of the business letter, which in some respects requires more preparation and form than the personal or social letter. Millions of business letters are written monthly, and a large part of the world's affairs are conducted through the channels of correspondence. While it is impossible in this space to give any adequate counsel concerning the multifarious letter of business, we want to dwell a moment on one particular variety—the letter of application for a position.

Fully one half of all the better class of jobs are obtained by means of written application, and it has been stated that less than five per cent of men and women in the working ranks know how to compose a good letter of this character. Therefore, we are prompted to indicate a few general principles that may serve to guide a willing, but perplexed applicant. Our advice may be summed up as follows:

Be as brief as you can without neglecting essentials. Tell who you are, what you have done, and what you want to do, in not more than one hundred and fifty words. If answering an advertisement, be sure to meet all the particulars it requires. Give your age and experience explicitly. Steer clear of stereotyped expressions such as, "I take my pen in hand to answer your ad," and so forth. Write upon only one side of your paper. Take your time in framing the letter. Rewrite it several times if you think you can improve it, and consider it a good sign if with each revision the letter grows shorter. Unlike a letter to a friend, one of application for a position should be painstakingly prepared. Look out for any suggestion of conceit or egoism in your statements. Be specific in giving your qualifications to your presumable employer. Thus, instead of saying: "I respectfully offer my services for the position you adver-

tise in the *Gazette*, as I am competent to fill the place," make it something like this: "I am a stenographer of ten years' experience, and can write one hundred and twenty words a minute." Make a note of the fact, too, that in these days a typewritten letter of application is given precedence over the handwritten one, unless, of course, the position calls for good penmanship. First and last and all the time, remember that your stationery must be of a good quality, your ink or typewriter ribbon fresh and clear, your signature plain and simple. All of these minor details have major effects.

CORRESPONDENCE AND EARNING CAPACITY.

Some parodist has said: "Electric communications corrupt good correspondence," implying that the telegraph, the telephone, the cable, and the wireless have done away with much of the need and accomplishment of writing good letters; but we think that these most human documents are by no means superseded either in social or business life. On the contrary, it is becoming more evident every day that the really fine art of letter writing is being appreciated both socially and commercially. Many progressive business houses have discovered its value, and the person who can write a courteous, explicit, and engaging letter is now finding it an asset in earning capacity.

At least, we know of one clever woman who, realizing the growing importance of letter writing in business, decided to take it up as a means of livelihood. She offered her unique services to several firms, pointing out the necessity of felicitous and unhackneyed correspondence. A number of the concerns thought the project absurd, but one or two wide-awake business men gave her a trial, and she demonstrated her theories by increas-

ing the amount of sales after six months' experimentation. It set her on the road to success. She has since established herself as a sort of "doctor of letters," and analyzes the correspondence of her clients, recommending changes in the old order as well as new methods of attack by mail. She makes the dry-as-dust commercial correspondence pulse with earnest purpose and keen argument. Allowing for time, place, and different object, it suggests the success of Sentimental Tommy in his capacity of sympathetic scribe for his village acquaintances in persuading their well-to-do relatives to remit money.

SUGGESTED READING.

If you wish to improve your own

ability to write letters, make a study of the best that have been preserved for us in literature. You can pick and choose from among scores. Madame de Sévigné is a model of natural letter writing. Then there are Swift, Chesterfield, Cowper, Gray, Lamb, Byron, Dickens, the Carlyles, and Stevenson. Coming closer to our own day, there are the letters of Lafcadio Hearn, William Vaughan Moody, and Richard Watson Gilder, to mention but a few. A work like Knight's "Half Hours with the Best Letter Writers" might prove useful.

For a club, a course might be evolved that would be highly interesting and instructive. Any help or suggestions that we may be able to give are at your service.



GUARANTEED HARMLESS

THE trustees of Vassar, according to the girls there, insist that any man who comes there to teach must be either married or engaged—out of respect to the brittle affections of their young charges. And in support of this statement, they tell the following tale, which has already become a classic among them.

One learned young Ph. D. seeking employment came and presented his credentials to the late ex-President Taylor.

"These are very satisfactory," said Doctor Taylor, "very satisfactory indeed. But first I must ask you a question: Are you married?"

The young man shook his head.

"Engaged, then?" persisted the questioner.

The young man still shook his head.

"Then I am sorry, very sorry," returned the president regretfully, "but I can't engage you. If only—during the summer—perhaps——"

"I will see what I can do," agreed the would-be professor, and turned away.

Six months later, he was back again, and once more requested a position.

"Ah," smiled Doctor Taylor in welcome, "here you are! You have married, I suppose, since I saw you last?"

"No-o," answered the young man.

"Oh, then you are engaged?"

"No, not even engaged, but——"

"Then why have you come back? Didn't you understand that you must be either married or engaged before you came here?"

"Yes," agreed the miserable young man, reddening. "But it isn't my fault, Doctor Taylor! I proposed to seven girls, and not one of them would have me!"

"You'll do!" cried Doctor Taylor delightedly. "The place is yours!"

At Wildacres

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Peaches," "The Deputation to Mrs. Roof," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

A strange and fascinating mystery story that is both tragic and happy.

I FIRST saw Marian Wheatleigh in the spring of 1913. I had gone to Rosecliff College to visit my sister, whom I had not seen during the six years of my absence on the other side of the world. Ruth and I were closely attached, however, and as soon as I came back to the United States, I made my way at once to her.

Much had happened since our parting. Our parents had both died, within a few days of each other, stricken down with pneumonia. I had been in Africa, out of reach of the cable, when this loss had befallen us; and by the time I had been apprised of it, there had been no respect I could show their memory, no solace I could afford Ruth, by leaving my work and returning to my home. She was then a sophomore in college and she was plentifully supplied with aunts, cousins, and friends who could play the conventional part of social guardians to her. So I had stayed, finished my work for my company there, and then had gone to India on another construction mission before coming home. When I arrived, however, I lost no time in making my way to Ruth.

My telegram, sent from the dock in New York, had been delayed, and I was awaiting her in a reception room that commanded a delightful vista of green before she knew that I was actually in the country. Informed that some one awaited her, she came from one of the ivy-covered stone-and-brick

buildings that gave a dignified, beautiful, English effect to the college campus and crossed a strip of lawn toward the wing in which I sat. Another girl joined her en route—a tall, supple Diana of a creature, whose hair showed copper-colored beneath a wide panama hat and whose white-clad feet flashed over the grass with a wonderful effect of grace and vigor. I recalled my rusty classics as I watched her—"the goddess revealed in her walk." For the second, I had no eyes for Ruth, stepping demurely along by her side.

When my sister pushed open the reception-room door and saw me, she gave a cry of gladness, and the face looking in over her shoulder—Ruth is a pocket Venus—was suddenly and sympathetically withdrawn. But even in that second, it had implanted itself forever on my heart—wide brow, generously set violet-gray eyes, full, laughing lips—the whole delightful ensemble of cream and rose, of health and vitality and gladness.

It was an indecently brief time before I put the question to my sister:

"Who was that who came in with you—the red-haired girl?"

Ruth's face crinkled into laughter.

"Red-haired indeed!" she cried. "Confess that you're only trying to appear unimpressed, Hubert! Confess that Marian's coronal of gold has fairly bowled you over!"

"Marian?" I repeated.

"Marian Wheatleigh," replied Ruth. Her face, dark and gypsylike, was drawn into lines of mock despair. "My best friend, Hubert—and I always told her that you and she were meant for each other and that she'd live to regret it if she didn't wait for you!"

"And she failed to be convinced?" I tried to achieve a humorous, a flip-pant manner, but I was myself aware that I sounded grotesquely anxious.

"Entirely!" said Ruth. "Well, her fate is on her own head. Her engagement to Oscar Golightly will be announced a little while after graduation."

"So Oscar is no longer in his perambulator?" I asked. "It seems to me that that was his mode of progression when last I saw him."

"Hubert!" shrilled Ruth, inordinately pleased with my witticism. "He was graduated from Harvard two years ago. He's been reading law for two years. He'll be admitted this spring. Of course you know the Golightlys are *fearfully* rich now, and he won't practice. He will only manage his estate."

"The Golightly news hadn't penetrated to the African desert," I growled.

My own achievements of the past six years suddenly dwindled in my estimation, when I contrasted them with those of the young man whose career was to consist in managing his own estate—and in marrying Marian Wheatleigh.

Before I went away from Rosecliff, I was in possession of practically a complete biography of Miss Wheatleigh. She was an orphan, without brothers or sisters. Her guardian was her stepfather, Doctor Schuyler Dawson. Her maternal grandparents were living, old Colonel Swift and his wife. At that point I had interrupted Ruth.

"That makes Miss Wheatleigh a relative of our own, does it not? What

relation is Great-aunt Sally Swift to us?"

"No real relation," replied Ruth promptly. "It was Great-aunt Sally Swift's first husband who was our grandfather's brother, and Marian's mother was Great-aunt Sally's daughter by this second marriage to Colonel Swift. But mother and father were always very fond of Aunt Sally, and she and the colonel have been perfectly ducky to me. I've visited their place with Marian three summers now—you know, Pleasant Harbor, on the Hudson. It is right next to Marian's own place—or her stepfather's, Doctor Dawson's. I believe it is really his. Mrs. Dawson left him everything when she died, and this place was one her father and mother had fixed up for her. But Marian never goes there."

"Doesn't care for her mother's choice in second husbands?" I hazarded.

"No-o—it isn't that." Ruth's manner was judicial. "I don't think she knows him very well. She was only twelve when her mother died, and she's been away at school and college ever since, practically. And summers—every one of them—Doctor Dawson has always been off, at medical conventions and things. I don't believe she's seen him since. She says he was simply mad about her mother, and she thinks that maybe he can't bear to see her. It would bring back the past too sharply, or something."

"So you read the old-fashioned novels in Rosecliff?" I commented. "And you get your ideas of personal relations from those trustworthy sources, Augusta J. Evans and——"

"Never heard of her," declared Ruth promptly. "But there must be some reason, mustn't there, why her stepfather doesn't care to see Marian?"

"He may be a lunatic," I suggested. I could not conceive of a sane man, having any sort of a claim to see Marian Wheatleigh, who would forego it.



My sister gave a cry of gladness, and the face looking in over her shoulder was suddenly and sympathetically withdrawn.

"Hubert! He's a most distinguished bacteriologist. He's discovered the germs of more diseases than you could shake a stick at. Lunatic! I like that!"

It was easy to see that Ruth had grown up firm in the flattering faith that all her geese were swans; not even the stepfather of a friend of hers was to be considered anything but a leader in his profession. However, I had myself a dim recollection of having heard of Doctor Schuyler Dawson and his contributions to medical science. I admitted as much, and at that moment Ruth saw her friend again crossing the strip of lawn upon which the long French windows of the reception room opened. She sprang to one of them and called the girl back.

Marian, turning, gave us the full friendliness of her eyes and crossed to where we stood. Ruth made her presentation bubblingly. I had no doubt that she had represented me to Miss Wheatleigh as fully as distinguished an ornament to the engineering world as Golightly was to finance and Doctor Dawson to medical science. Marian's lovely eyes held a hint of respect, of expectation, certainly not derivable from anything in my appearance.

I asked the girls to come to dinner with me at my hotel down in the town, and as they were enjoying the numerous privileges that belong to seniors the month before they go forth to conquer the world, they were allowed to come. And all the way in, as I sat half turned in my seat beside the chauffeur and watched them and listened to them and laughed with them, I felt that Ruth had prognosticated with fatal accuracy what the result of meeting Marian Wheatleigh would be upon me.

I was thirty-two years old, and I had never been in love since I was a boy of seventeen, when all the first fruits of my heart had been laid at the feet of a lovely woman of thirty-five. But

I had always been sure that when the great experience befell me again, it would come full-fledged, full-grown, unmistakable. Well, at least I had been a good prophet. I had fallen in love with this radiant creature without having heard her speak. Now that I had heard her speak, I was miserably sure that I should never fall in love again. And she was on the verge of announcing her engagement to Oscar Golightly, a stripling of some twenty-three!

At the commencement festivities that shortly followed my return to America, I met Golightly. I tried to comfort myself with the belief that it was a boy-and-girl affair that might come to nothing. When Ruth, fairly incoherent with the sense of romance and speaking chiefly in italics, asked me if they were not, after all and in spite of her private wishes, simply *made* for each other, I retorted that they were too obviously made for each other. And so they were—as the lovers on a magazine cover are made for each other. Golightly's youth, vigor, good looks, and zest for harmless gayety, matched Marian's own.

It all fitted together too nicely. Nature doesn't work that way, I kept telling myself. They were not destined to unlock for each other the depths and the fullness of life any more than two dazzling, sun-smitten clouds chasing across the sky on a May day are destined to reveal all the powers and possibilities of the nebular world. But there was nothing that I could sanely and decently allege against the match, for it isn't considered sane and decent to object to a marriage on the sole ground that one wants the bride oneself.

The engagement was to be announced at Pleasant Harbor, Marian's grandmother's place, up on the Hudson. Ruth and I were invited to be of the house party assembled for the

festivity. Doctor Dawson's own place, adjoining Pleasant Harbor, was to be opened and, I understood, refurbished. He wanted Marian to be married from it. He was abroad, as was not infrequent, at the moment, but he would be back in time to be part of the family gathering of congratulation. Before I went to Pleasant Harbor, I did what I had believed, three months before, would be impossible. I signed a contract for another two years' absence from my own land, for another two years of loneliness and desolation in one of the earth's waste places. There I could have out with myself the battle over my unreasonable, precipitate love for Marian Wheatleigh.

Pleasant Harbor was rightly named. A charming arm of the river crooked itself at Colonel Swift's landing place. A gentle green slope ascended to the house, before which the trees had been well cleared away, so that nothing obscured the view of the water. It was an unpretentious house, long and low-lying, rising from gardens and with a glitter of greenhouse glass behind it. To one side and the other stretched orchards and fields. There were plentiful piazzas, gay with awnings, wicker furniture, pottery jars, and flower boxes. Inside, the place seemed all gay chintz and swinging bird cages, open fires, flowers, books. Aunt Sally Swift had brought with her from the South, where she had been a girl more than half a century ago, the art of decorating existence. At seventy-five, her house still expressed her; she loved sunshine and youth, blossoms, birds, comforts, and gladness.

I do not think that the atmosphere of the home of my great-aunt-by-courtesy would have so greatly impressed me had it not been in such marked contrast to that of her neighbor, Doctor Dawson. The Dawson place was known as "Wildacres." It had been an uncultivated part of the Swift es-

tate twenty-five years before, when Claudia Swift had met Ned Wheatleigh and they had fallen headlong in love with each other. The colonel had adored his pretty daughter almost as ardently as had her mother, and it had been the happy thought of the two to give Claudia a few acres on which to build her a new home within a stone's throw, almost, of her old one.

Wildacres lay considerably higher on the slope than the buildings of Pleasant Harbor, and was, perhaps, a quarter of a mile south of them. The river property just below that portion of the ridge did not belong to Colonel Swift, whose holding was an irregular-shaped piece, somewhat like two oblongs, with the long side of the upper adjoining the short side of the lower. A hedge of spruce had been set out between Claudia's bridal property and her old home, and between it and the estate lying below Wildacres. In the twenty-five years this hedge had grown dense, ragged, and tall, almost completely cutting off the view of the upper house from the lower.

The spruces seemed to strike the note of the place; it, like them, was gloomy, straggling, unkempt. It had not been built in the happiest architectural period of country houses; horticulture, to which Pleasant Harbor owed so much of its charm, had been a less lovely art in Claudia Wheatleigh's day than it had become since, and the neglected gardens around the neglected house were geometrically ugly affairs, now given over largely to weeds.

From one corner of the neglected house, however, a sort of roofed alley had been built, and this led to an annex of much more modern type—as modern, indeed, as the new garage. It was a small stone structure, and its smartness and permanency added to the dingy, slatternly effect of the old house.

"It is Schuyler Dawson's laboratory," Great-aunt Sally told me, as I inquired about the new building. She sighed, but with impatience. "You don't remember him, of course—I dare say you never heard of him. Even if your elders talked about Claudia's second marriage, you, of course, wouldn't have been interested. He's a strange man. He has never, I think, gotten over poor Claudia's death. It's been years now. Ah, well! What do I really know about him? Perhaps he doesn't remember her, after all. He's absorbed in his experiments. He's really a wonderful man. The dear girl would have been so proud, could she have lived to share his fame."

"He doesn't practice, does he?" I asked.

I was staring across the top of a gate in the thick, overgrown hedge toward the dingy house, with its cupola awry, and its need of paint, and its weedy garden plots.

"No. He's called in consultation sometimes, I believe. But he devotes himself wholly—one may say 'wholly'—to experimentation. Some wonderful toxins, I hear Sam say, are his contribution to science. I'm not scientific myself."

"Do you see much of him when he is here?"

"Very little. He—well, I don't know quite how to say it, but I think he shrinks a little from seeing those of us who were near to Claudia. It hurts him too much, I suppose. There are people like that, you know. I'm not. I should love to see any one who was fond of my dear child. I like to keep her alive in my thoughts, in my talk."

The dear old lady wiped her eyes, and I patted her hand, still firm, fine, and white. She gave my brown paw a grateful squeeze.

"But we can't all be alike, can we? The world would be too monotonous. Doctor Dawson is the exact opposite

to me. He doesn't want to talk about Claudia or to be reminded of her. Yet he stays here a great deal, when he is in this part of the world. I don't know! I have sometimes wondered if it weren't a species of jealousy. He wanted to be the whole of Claudia's life, and he resents us—the colonel and me. He has never been at home at the same time with Marian since Claudia died. I don't think he's seen her. It must be a kind of jealousy."

"It sounds like some perversion of love," I agreed.

"He's missed a great deal, I think. Don't you, Hubert? Don't you think my Marian is a dear girl?"

I agreed tonelessly that Marian seemed a dear girl. As I spoke the meaningless words, I thought of her, of the eager, friendly eyes, of the generosity, the gladness, the nobility, of the whole lovely face; and, thinking, I let my nails bite the palms of my hands. I wanted that face turned toward me every day of my life for all the years that should be! And here was dear old Great-aunt Sally prattling along about Oscar Golightly and his eminent suitability for Marian.

The party gathered, and even my jealousy could find no flaw in the boy—except the all-embracing one of his existence, of his priority to me in Marian's acquaintance. I watched them together with the jaundiced eyes of jealousy. They were charming, there was no question as to that; but always there recurred to me my original impression about the unreality of their union. They were an effective, even a radiant *tableau vivant*, to be entitled "The Lovers." It was superfine amateur theatricals that we were all witnessing, upon which we were all congratulating them, not life. Youth and propinquity and the buzz about "suitability" had brought about this engagement, I felt sure, and not the deep needs of two natures.

And then, when I had come to this conclusion, I had to kick myself mentally for a jealous ass, and Marian's gray eyes would look at me questioningly, timidly, as if she feared that she had some fault in my eyes. And I would go for a ten-mile walk to keep myself in hand.

The engagement was to be formally announced at a dinner and dance that Great-aunt Sally was to give on the evening of the day after Doctor Dawson arrived from a big London congress of physicians. He came straight out to Wildacres, and he telephoned his mother-in-law that he would be down immediately after he had dressed. It would give him, he said, half an hour or so with her and Marian before the dinner guests arrived. Marian was nervously excited by the message, and so, for some reason, was I.

I had dressed early and had gone downstairs and out onto the terrace. The lowering June sun had scarcely begun to color the Palisades with pink and gold. I was watching the bright river, dotted with boats, and the cliffs on the farther shore, when a window behind me opened, and Marian came out upon the broad tiled piazza. She was paler than her wont, and her eyes were strangely luminous.

I threw away my cigarette and



She came closer to me and looked over her shoulder lest any one should be within hearing distance.

pushed forward a chair for her, but she shook her head.

"I don't want to sit down," she said. "I—I couldn't. I'm too restless."

"It's a nerve-racking business to announce one's engagement."

"No, it's not that," said Marian seriously, refusing to rise to any bait of mild humor. "I feel as if my engagement were already announced. When I told the people I really care for, you know—granny and Ruth and people like that. No, I'm nervous about seeing—my stepfather. People haven't a right to be mysterious, have they, Hubert?" Every time she spoke my name—Ruth had insisted upon the intimacy between her dearest friend and her dear and only brother—a little knife turned in my heart, and I couldn't for the life of me tell whether the sensation was painful or joyful. "You see, to me my stepfather has been so mysterious a figure always. I—I—am frightened."

She came closer to me and looked over her shoulder lest any one should be within hearing distance.

"There's always the idea of unhappiness in the thought of him. I ought not to say it—I ought not to feel it. Oscar says it's morbid. But—can one always help what one feels?"

From a full heart and a present experience, I answered that indeed one could not always help what one felt.

"If only he had let me connect him with some thoughts of just ordinary life!" she went on. "But he didn't. I hadn't got over the impression of him as I had it at my father's death—my own dear father's—when—when my mother's death occurred. And then I never saw him again. I—I—It's hateful to feel as I do—a coward—in a panic. And I ought not to talk about it. Oscar says that morbid fancies grow by indulgence. Only"—she smiled, and the look of nervous restlessness upon her face gave way to the charming mutiny of a pretty, pampered woman—"only I do wish he had stayed at his old congresses until my wedding was over!"

"That will be when?" I asked politely, and wondered if she could hear

the pounding of my blood as I heard it, deafeningly, against my ears.

"In September," she answered.

And then her eyes, as if compelled by something outside herself, turned slowly toward mine and questioned me painfully. I told myself determinedly that that look of quest and of sorrow grew out of her nebulous dread of her stepfather's appearance, out of the old, vague, unhappy memories that his impending presence awoke in her. I grasped at the subject for safety.

"You said something about having your thoughts of your stepfather involved with your recollections of your father's death. Did they, then, know each other?"

"Only a little, I suppose. My own father, you know, died in Buenos Aires. He hadn't been very well, I believe—grandma tells me so—and we all went touring the West Indies and South America that winter, he and my mother and I. Doctor Dawson was in Buenos Aires then. He was a practicing physician there—the American practicing physician. I was only a little thing of nine; I don't remember anything clearly, and of course what I imagine I remember is largely what I have learned since from granny. My father was imprudent, I believe—went about too much in the sun, went into some ill-aired places, ate or drank something he should not have eaten or drunk—I don't know quite what. But he developed one of those virulent enteric fevers they have in such places. He died there. That is how my early, dim remembrances of my stepfather are involved with my own father's death."

She looked off across the river to the deepening colors on the opposite shore.

"They were married—Doctor Dawson and my mother—two years after. He came back to this country. He had been, I suppose—so granny says—tre-

mendously smitten with mother down there in Buenos Aires."

"Are you," I asked her, trying to control my voice, "like your mother?"

I think my tones must have betrayed me at the end, for she drew her gaze back from the river and the cliffs and looked at me with a dawning of surprised comprehension in her eyes. She flushed a little as she shook her head.

"No, I'm like my father's people."

Doctor Dawson's swift descent into love was not so explicable to me as it had bidden fair, two or three seconds before, to be.

"You have never seen my stepfather?" she asked me.

"Never."

"He's rather young to be so distinguished," she said idly. "I don't believe he's much over thirty-seven. He—he was a little younger than my mother. She would have been forty-four or five, if she had lived." Then she caught, as it were, at her own attention. "I wonder why I keep talking to you about all these uninteresting family affairs?" she said.

"I suppose it's because you know that they are not dull family affairs to me," I said, somewhat to my own astonishment. And again her luminous eyes were freighted with question and with vague sadness as she looked at me.

But before her lips could formulate the query of her eyes, and before I could make a more unmitigated fool of myself, blurting out to her the futile story of my love and longing that made all her family wildly interesting to me, a step sounded at the end of the terrace. I turned. Marian already faced in that direction. I heard her exclamation, and a suave "Marian, my dear!" even while my eyes were taking the measure of the man who had joined us.

He was not tall, but he was nevertheless built for grace and strength. His

thick, closely cropped hair was black, his complexion swarthy. His eyes and his beard—which was cut in a trim Vandyke that did not mar the line of his jaw—were as black as his hair. With the recollection of Buenos Aires in my mind, I wondered if he were not a native of the tropics. In spite of the depth of his coloring, his looks were cold. The eyes looked warily forth beneath the fine, slightly protuberant brow; his mouth had learned the valuable trick of keeping itself closed beneath the concealing beard, one divined. His hands were long, graceful, rather remarkable. He bore himself with an air of distinction, and I knew that in any gathering, in any chance crowd, even, he would command attention both by his looks and by the force of the personality behind them.

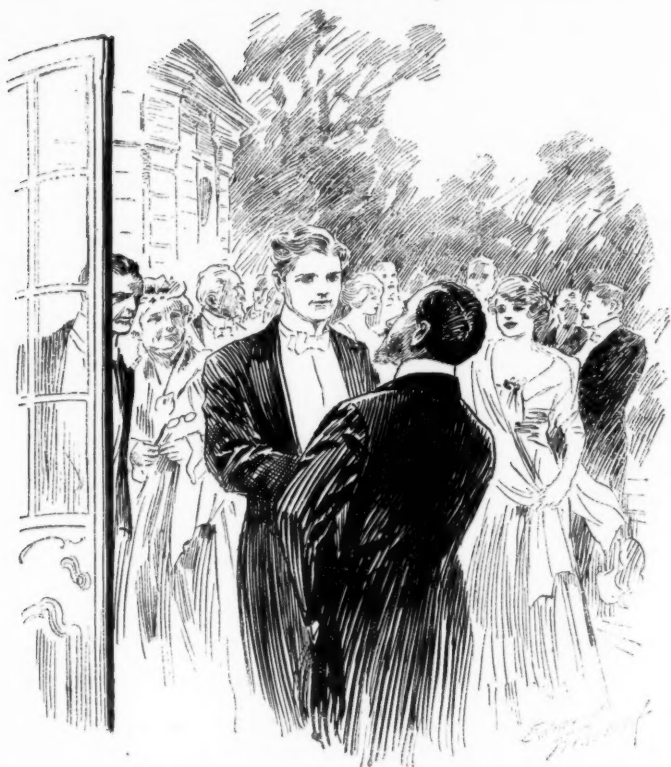
His greeting to Marian was perfect—cordial, congratulatory, but without any presumption of an intimacy that his own course had so long forbidden. When she introduced me to him, he showed a mouthful of white teeth in a pleasant smile.

"Mr. Hubert Baring?" he asked, with a flattering accent on my name. I admitted that I was Hubert.

"The man who has made the desert blossom," he said.

"Hardly that," I interrupted, but I was pleased, of course, that any one had ever heard of me in connection with my irrigation ditches. Outside my office and my engineers' club, this was the first reference I had heard to my work since I had come home.

He had the air of intending to compliment me by some further remarks when there was an exodus from the drawing-room behind us. The colonel and Oscar Golightly came out, followed by some of the other men who were staying at Pleasant Harbor. There was a babble of introductions. Doctor Dawson said the fitting word to every one. He looked rather hard



Doctor Dawson said the fitting word to every one. He looked rather hard at young Golightly. "You see, my dear fellow," he explained his scrutiny, "I'm nominally Marian's guardian!"

at young Golightly, but no harder than the circumstances warranted.

"You see, my dear fellow," he explained his scrutiny, "I'm nominally Marian's guardian!"

"You forgot it for a long time, doctor," the girl told him, smiling a little.

He looked at her attentively.

"I cheated myself," he said, "but otherwise I cannot see that I have done any wrong. I doubt, my dear"—his smile was touched with melancholy—"whether I could have improved upon the result had I spent all these years in guardianing you."

The girl blushed a trifle before the flattery of his words and glance, and he looked long and meditatively at her. When, finally, he withdrew his eyes, he sighed a barely audible sigh.

"He's thinking of Claudia," whispered Great-aunt Sally in my ear.

Perhaps he was, but I felt no inner conviction to that effect, and I disliked him for being moderately young and good looking, distinguished and "interesting."

My new contract was timed to remove me from the United States in

season to prevent my acting as usher at Marian Wheatleigh's wedding, which was something that Ruth thought would be perfectly lovely. I carried myself and my gnawing desire for Marian off into Asia. On ship-board, I thought a great deal about the circumstances of her life. Aunt Sally Swift's harmless Southern romanticism, her theories about the undying quality of Schuyler Dawson's affection for her daughter, did not weigh heavily with me. As I saw the situation, he had been an astute young physician who had married a rich, and doubtless attractive, widow, considerably his senior. He had thus paved the way for his change from a practicing physician to a bacteriological expert. He had inherited her fortune, which Ned Wheatleigh had left to her with the unconditional confidence of an easy, generous nature.

Of course no harm had come to Marian as a result of the situation; Marian would be the only heir of the Swifts, and she was going to be the wife of an inordinately rich young man. And no one—certainly not Aunt Sally, not Marian—had ever intimated that the man had been mercenary in his marriage or that he was illiberal in his treatment of Marian. I didn't even know, I reminded myself, whether his was only a life interest in his wife's estate or whether he held it in fee simple.

However, I would always come back to an instinctive feeling of dislike I had for the man. The growing admiration with which he had regarded Marian during the days I had stayed at Pleasant Harbor had filled me with smoldering disgust and distaste. I was almost glad that she was going to marry Oscar Golightly, the nice lad whose sole distinction was his money!

The news of Golightly's death reached me months after it had occurred. It shocked and stunned me, at

first with the sheer human pity of it. All the weeks, while I had been envying him his glad, free companionship with Marian, all the weeks, while the imagined sight of their happiness had been always before my eyes—all those weeks he had been dead, moldering in his grave! And she had been living, companioned only by sadness, loneliness, and tender grief.

My second feeling was selfish, brutal perhaps. What a fool, what a fool I had been, to tie myself up so that I was not near to comfort her, not near to win her away from the paths of melancholy! If I had been on the spot, loving her as I loved her, surely, surely, I could have awakened in her generous heart some spark of response! Fool, fool that I had been!

Then I read Ruth's incoherent, tearful screed more carefully. The boy had been stricken with typhoid in mid-summer; no one knew where he had acquired it—when does one know? He had been on a camping expedition in the West; he had stopped at numerous hotels en route; he had paid a brief visit to Pleasant Harbor on his return. And then, going back to his own home, near Philadelphia, he had, after a week or so, succumbed to the malady that is sometimes so much more devastating to the young and vigorous than to old age or to infancy. Marian, Ruth said, was dazed by her loss.

I cursed again the precipitancy with which I had sold away my freedom for the next year and a half. I could not go home and try to win her, as I told myself I had now the right to do. I should have had that right even had I believed her youthful love for Golightly a real and mature passion. I knew that I should be willing to take anything that Marian had left to give from the riches of her heart! But believing, as I deeply and convincingly did, that her affection for Oscar had not begun to plumb the possibilities of

her nature, I felt all the more that the next wooer would have every sanction to plead his cause, to fight his battle. He would not be asking her to put away the living memory of a perfect love, to decline upon some plane of tepidity of emotional life; he would be asking her to come with him into the true splendor and fulfillment of love.

But I was eighteen months away from Marian. All that I could do was to write her a letter of condolence. After a long time, she answered it with one, pale and kind and remote. And Ruth, though I begged her to keep me informed about her friend—though I almost, as I thought, bared my heart to her—wrote chiefly about her own affairs. Sometimes there would be no mention at all of Marian in her letters. I began a feverish correspondence with Great-aunt Sally Swift, terminated abruptly, by and by, in the fashion in which friendships with the aged are so poignantly apt to be terminated. The sentimental, pretty, gay old lady, with her genius for the practically æsthetic, went down, like my own mother, before a winter attack of pneumonia. And the colonel, finding life an indifferent, flavorless thing without her, became suddenly a stricken, tremulous old man and did not survive her two months.

My contract was almost expired when the news of this fresh desolation in Marian's life reached me. I counted the hours until I could begin my journey back to her. Ruth had told me of her own engagement and had dwelt at some length upon the fraternal feelings that made her defer her wedding until I could arrive to give her away.

I returned home by way of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and I landed in New York. Ruth and her young man, in the discreet chaperonage of Cousin Susie Gray, with whom Ruth was living, had come on from

Philadelphia to meet me. For a few minutes the radiance of my little sister's face banished the haunting thought of the other radiant face that was always before my eyes. I looked the aspirant for her hand over. He was a good-looking, clean-cut chap who met my eyes steadily. So that was all right!

It was not until we were having luncheon at my hotel that I asked about Marian or spoke of the colonel and Great-aunt Sally. Ruth's mobile face clouded.

"The dear old people!" she said. "Oh, Hubert, it has been heartbreaking for Marian!"

"Of course," I answered. "She was deeply attached to them, I know. And coming comparatively soon after Go-lightly's death—"

"Yes," said Ruth. She toyed with her salad, studying its component parts with great assiduity. "Yes." Then she raised her eyes and fixed them on Walter Hearndon's. "She—I don't see how she can do it—quite—she's engaged again."

For a minute I thought that I had choked on a piece of bread, so sharp was the stricture in my throat.

"Oh, Ruth!" protested Cousin Susie. Then she turned to me. "Of course," she said, with an understanding smile, "Ruth is in the state where one love in one life seems the only possibility that isn't fairly degrading! And that's right and proper enough. But I do resent it that she doesn't see Marian's situation more sympathetically."

"I'm glad now," cried Ruth shrilly, "that she didn't fall in love with you, Hubert, or you with her. Just think—poor Oscar isn't dead two years —"

"Suppose you tell me all about it, Susie," I suggested, and Susie complied.

"Ruth's a dear sentimentalist, as it

is right for a girl in her enviable position to be," she said. "But poor Marian! I try to make Ruth see that she became engaged to Oscar Golightly when she was a mere child, almost—not more than nineteen. Of course, if he had lived and they had married, she would probably have loved him devotedly. She has a fine, outgoing nature, generous and affectionate and loyal. But they were both so young that it was more like playing at love than loving, if you know what I mean?"

I nodded. It was interesting to hear my own thoughts voiced.

"Well, poor Oscar died. And she was very deeply stricken by the loss, and she was very lonely. And then, when the dear colonel and Aunt Sally went, she was more than ever lonely. It was dreadful for her up there in that gloomy old house of Doctor Dawson's—"

"Ah! She went there?"

"Yes, of course. He's her guardian, you know. And he's been staying at home for the last year or two. Well, there was she in that gloomy old place, with her only companion a man immersed in science, who didn't know whether or not she was there—scarcely. And the Golightlys were as anxious for it as the young man himself——"

"The Golightlys? The young man himself?"

"Yes. It's a cousin of Oscar's, you know—the one he always liked a lot, the one whom the father and mother have promoted, as it were, to Oscar's place. They've made him their heir, and he lives with them, and I must say he's charming to them. And they wanted Marian, too. And so it's all been arranged, and I for one can't feel as Ruth does about it."

Walter struck in with something about the distastefulness of second marriages and second engagements, and Susie repressed a smile. Much must be allowed first love!

"Who has the Swift place now—Pleasant Harbor?" I asked, when I had managed to agree with Susie that there was nothing shocking in Marian's new betrothal.

It was on the market, they told me, the executors of the will having decided to put all of Marian's inheritance into something more easily negotiable than real estate.

"Pleasant Harbor is really an awful extravagance," said Susie. "It's so near to the city now that it ought to be cut into building plots. A development company is looking at it. If they can get a few other places near by, they'll buy Pleasant Harbor, and they'll build an exclusive suburban colony."

I said to myself that they wouldn't, not if I knew myself! I didn't want that property given over to the commuter. Marian and I had once stood on the terrace there, and had watched the sunset on the cliffs across the river, and had looked into each other's eyes with the beginning of understanding. I would buy that place myself. Ruth should have her wedding from the sunny old house.

And, incidentally, when I should walk up to the spruce hedge and along to the little gate, I could look upon the roof that sheltered Marian—for a little while, at any rate!

I suppose I paid an extravagant price for my fancy, for the executors played me and the development company off against each other. And, also, I was in a hurry, which is always an expensive thing. But, dear or cheap, Pleasant Harbor was mine within ten days, chintzes, mahogany, flower gardens, and all. And Ruth was with me, and we were going over to see Marian Wheatleigh at her stepfather's place.

She was curiously changed. She was as beautiful as ever—perhaps more beautiful than ever. But the old look of gladness and gayety had gone, and in its stead had come an expression not

so much of sorrow as of apprehension. She was still in mourning for her grandparents, and it accentuated the new look in her face. Even the critical Ruth, seeing her, was moved to forget her criticisms and to run to her with a little cry, all pity and love.

The girl seemed pathetically glad that Pleasant Harbor had been saved from the march of suburban progress. And she seemed glad of something else, also.

"I am so happy that it is you who have bought it," she told me, her eyes on mine with a long look I could not fathom. We were alone at the moment, Ruth having dragged Walter—who was among those present—off to see a view. "I shall feel—safer."

"Safer?" I echoed.

She nodded, but did not speak again. Her eyes dilated curiously and, following their direction, I saw her guardian coming along the hall.

He greeted me politely, but without cordiality. He had heard of my purchase and thought it a poor one, except, perhaps, for land speculation. How long did I purpose to remain in the United States this time?

I said that I purposed to remain here indefinitely, permanently, indeed, and that I had bought Pleasant Harbor as a home, not as a speculation. He nodded a disapproving understanding, and looked intently at Marian.

I make no claim to any unusual powers of judgment or of divination, I have never had a moment of clairvoyance in my life, but as I looked at Schuyler Dawson, following the direction of his eyes, reading them, little as they invited that process, I knew his secret. He was in love with his stepdaughter, in love with Marian Wheatleigh. And all the fury of anger and of jealousy I had never been able to feel against the likable boy, Oscar Golithly, and that I now was unable to feel against his cousin, flowed hotly

through my veins for this dark, middle-aged, losing lover—this lover whose cause was as hopeless as my own. What right had he to love Marian? How dared he look upon her with eyes of desire?

Her drawing-room was old-fashioned, dingy. By and by she said that, if we did not mind coming through the covered alley into the laboratory wing, she would make us some tea in more cheerful surroundings. It seemed that the laboratory wing had been fitted out not only as a workshop, but as a sort of bachelor living place as well. There was a bedroom, a study, and a sort of kitchenette arrangement, which Doctor Dawson had been in the habit of using in the days of his wandering, when he had kept no staff of servants on the place.

"There's a good view of the river from the doctor's study," said Marian. "One sees the sunset. I always have tea there."

So we all filed through the alley and into the new wing, and in the study, whose view was, indeed, charming, Marian made tea. In the kitchenette there was a little store of comestibles.

"It's like 'playing house,'" said Ruth, and Marian nodded.

I came away oppressed and depressed. I tried to reason with my wild intuitions that I couldn't possibly know that Doctor Schuyler Dawson was in love with his ward; that it was absurd for me to assume such a thing; that, even if he were, there was no law, human or divine, to forbid him; that, even if he were, that was all the good he would get out of it, for she was to be married, as soon as her period of mourning for her grandparents was over, to some one quite other than Schuyler Dawson; that, in any case, it was none of my business. But to all of this excellent reasoning, I kept saying, "Damn him, damn him!" and feeling

that, in some way or other, I was going to fight him.

The next morning I was out in a canoe when Marian pushed out from the shore. I think we had made some tentative plan to meet thus. We paddled along together for a while and finally landed about a mile up the shore. There was more color, more happiness, in her face than there had been the night before—a relaxing of tension, as it were.

I had never meant to say to her what I said that morning—I had never meant to tell her of my love—but something in that old look of question that she turned once more upon me brought the words to my lips.

"Oh, my dear!" I murmured. "My dear! Marian—if I had been at home, if I had met you first——"

"Oh, don't, don't!" cried Marian, and hid her face in her hands.

When, kissing the interlaced fingers, I sought to uncover her face, there was a tang of salt upon my lips.

"How could I dream?" said Marian. "You were older and you had done such things in the world, and—and— and anyway——"

But when I sought to force her to make those broken exclamations into a declaration that she might have loved me, she grew suddenly obstinate. She sat erect again, her tear-stained face uncovered, and the look of apprehension again in her lovely eyes.

"Listen!" she whispered. "Even if I were not going to marry Oscar's cousin, even if I were not going to try to make up to Father and Mother Golithly for what they have lost—even if I had let myself love you and were free to marry you, I would not do it. Oh, Hubert, I would never do it!" She leaned closer to me and whispered lower. "Whatever I love most dies. It is a fate. I am like—I am like—— What is that deadly tree beneath which everything perishes?"

"You poor, overwrought, foolish child!" I cried and sought to take her hands.

But she eluded me. She looked at me with wide, sad, convinced eyes.

"Don't try to make me believe it is not so," she said. "Everything, every one! There was my father and there was my mother."

"My dearest, think of all the orphans in the world!"

"And Oscar——"

"It was heartbreaking, Marian, but it was not a 'fate.' Hundreds of girls have seen their lovers die before their wedding day——"

"And granny and the colonel——"

"Two old people whose span of life was measured. Oh, my dear, don't be morbid!"

"My horse—even my horse! My pretty, gentle, gay little Ladybird, that grandpa gave me! And my dog—— Anything, I tell you, anything at all that I love!"

She was shaking as if she were in an ague. I realized that her state was dangerous. I did not argue for the moment. I tried to soothe her with meaningless words, but her mood, half deranged, affected me also.

"The house that I loved—it was to go, too! It was to be sold and the place so changed that I would not ever care to see it again! Everything I love, everything I love!"

I reasoned with her, and I think that by and by some of the conviction of melancholia, which was laying such hold upon her, began to vanish. But she would not let me talk to her of love; she would not admit that that little rise of feeling in her toward me might ever have surged up into the great, blessed force of life. And she insisted upon paddling back alone to Wildacres.

Two days later, I learned, quite incidentally, that Schuyler Dawson was one of the promoters of the plan to buy





what I have always said! Everything that I love!" she wailed again. And, sobbing, I put my arm around her to comfort her.

Pleasant Harbor for development purposes. It did not fit in with what I had divined of his passion for Marian. He knew her love for the place and, loving her, I reasoned, he would desire to keep it as she wanted it. Probably I had misread him, with a lover's genius for misreading the minds of other men!

I met the new fiancé, a nice enough fellow, who did not impress me as vastly pleased with the wonderful situation in which he had suddenly found himself—the heir to a big property, the promised husband of a beautiful girl. After I had diagnosed him as being rather complacent toward the plans of his benefactors than urged by love for Marian, I was the more determined to oust him. There was no harm in it; there was no unsportsmanlike quality in the undertaking, I told myself.

I did not put my determination into execution. When Charles Judson went back to the Golightly place outside Philadelphia, he was taken ill. His disease baffled the doctors; it seemed some slow fever not common in our latitudes. Marian, learning of his illness, came to me with an almost fanatic light in her eyes.

"You see, you see!" she cried. "Oh, I told you—and I told him! Everything that touches me! Hubert, do I carry death about with me?"

At any rate, she did not carry it for Charles Judson. He slowly recovered, and when he was restored to health, he wrote to Marian, asking release from his engagement. It was a manly enough letter; she let me read it. He told her of the honest, brotherly affection in which he held her, but said that during the long hours of his convalescence, he had had opportunity to examine his heart as he had never done before. He did not love her as she should be loved, and he was happy in the conviction that he was not, to her, other than a dear friend.

"You have released him?" I said, handing it back.

"Well, naturally," said Marian, with a gleam of her old spirit. "One doesn't deny requests of that sort." Then her mood changed. She looked at me with haunted eyes. "He wouldn't believe me when I told him that I brought death to all who loved me and came close to me. He believes now."

Nothing that I could say would banish this awful notion from her mind. Nothing that I could say would induce her to consider me as a lover. But she went about with me, on the river and through the leafy roads, and gradually, I felt sure, I would win her away from the morbid terrors and beliefs that had possessed her as a result of too many tragic partings. Her nature was impressionable, and it was true that she had borne more than her share of human sorrow in too short a compass of time.

But when, the night after Ruth's wedding, Pleasant Harbor caught fire, and the guests remaining overnight were driven out by the blaze along with the master, her convictions returned upon her tenfold strengthened. She voiced them the next morning as we stood together looking upon the smoldering ruin.

"You see, you see!" she cried. "It's what I always said! I have told you this!"

"You didn't set the house afire, my dear," I informed her. "It was quite obviously due to defective wiring."

"Everything that I love!" she wailed again. And, sobbing, she did not rebuff me when, for a second, I put my arm around her to comfort her.

It was thus that Doctor Dawson came upon us. His eyes were malevolent, although Marian withdrew at once from the embrace that was scarcely more than a brotherly pat. I explained that she was weeping over the loss of her grandmother's place.

"But," I added, "I am going to have it reconstructed as nearly as I can—exactly as it was."

"You're foolishly sentimental, Baring," he told me. "It's ruinous to hold city property for country uses, and that's what all of us are doing who keep country places out here. You ought to pocket your insurance gratefully, sell out, and go farther afield, if you really are bucolically inclined."

He broke off abruptly. A look that I had never before surprised in his dark eyes was turned upon Marian. It was not the expression I had so often told myself that I had seen there—of desire, of cold, fierce, burning determination; it was almost a look of pity.

"Don't, Marian," he said to her. "Don't cry, my dear girl. I can't bear to see you cry." Then once more he turned to me, and with a half laugh and a man-to-man air, added: "If all men were like me, women would rule the world through tears. I cannot withstand them."

"It isn't just the house," explained Marian quaveringly, as she mopped her cheeks with a handkerchief. "It's what I have already said to Hubert—everything I care for comes to grief, comes to ruin. I—I am afraid of myself."

She shivered. He looked at her musingly.

"She's nervous and overwrought," I interpolated between Marian's words and whatever he was about to say. "Don't you think she should have a change—travel or something?"

"There is something in what she says," he answered slowly, meditatively. "I do not mean in her own particular case, of course. But there are human beings born to lonely, tragic fates; there are human beings who seem to carry about with them a blight for those with whom they come into close contact—"

"What sort of a way is that to talk

to an overexcited woman?" I cried angrily, for Marian was looking at him with eyes distended by terror, like a patient hearing the lips of final authority confirm the nightmarish dread of his own heart.

"Oh, of course not in Marian's case!" he said briskly. "Of course not in hers! I was merely thinking aloud—of other people. It would be an interesting study for the psychological fellows—the existence of what we might call spiritual 'Typhoid Marys'—persons who, sound themselves in heart and mind and body, nevertheless carry about with them some malignant germ of unhappiness, of loss, of tragedy."

Marian, with widening eyes and whitening lips, crumpled slowly down upon a davenport that had been saved from the blaze and that was now standing, portly and incongruous, just outside the area of still-hot ashes and débris.

"Good God, man, can't you do your theorizing somewhere else?" I cried, as her lids fluttered down over her lovely eyes.

He flashed a strange look upon me as he hurried to her side. He drew something from a case in his pocket and forced it between her ashen lips. In a second or two she revived, and he berated himself roundly for having talked what he termed "psychological nonsense" in her hearing.

She went away with him toward the spruce hedge, and I stood watching them. At the little gate, she turned and waved her hand to me. It was too far away for me to read the expression of her eyes, but I supplied one to suit my wishes—a look of tenderness and promise, a look instinctive, loving, not to be denied by any words that she might ever utter. That imagined look warmed my heart almost as much as the recollection that she had sobbed her grief out in my arms. She was free and I should win her. Nothing

stood between us any longer but her morbid notion of her "fate." I felt strong to overcome that delusion. There was that in Marian's own heart, I believed, which would fight on my side. I went down to the station to telephone an architect about the rebuilding of the house.

My hopes ran ahead of the facts by many months. Marian, although she seemed gradually to lose her morbid illusions in regard to herself, in changed surroundings—she made Ruth a long visit on the Maine coast and paid numerous shorter ones among her old college mates—nevertheless succumbed to them again each time I ventured to press my suit. She did not deny that she cared for me, but she used to say, with a pitiful intensity: "But I mustn't let myself do it, Hubert! I mustn't let myself care for you!" And a tremor of fear would seize her, and her lovely eyes would distend as if she saw a vision of dread.

Naturally such an effect of my love-making upon her taught me forbearance and patience. Only when some self-forgetful outburst of girlish spirit, some long period of tranquillity, of wholesome, normal interests, persuaded me that her delusion was laid forever did I break over the bounds of brotherly comradeship I had marked out for my intercourse with her.

The late autumn found her at Ruth's place in Merion for a week-end. I had not seen her for some time, and the sight of her stirred me with gladness. She was almost the lissome, gay, open-hearted young creature I had seen four years before, crossing the college campus with Ruth. To myself, I said that she was cured; and, being cured, she must of a certainty be ready for me and my love-making.

I was right. And there, in Ruth's library, discreetly cleared by that astute young person, late one afternoon I knew the best hour that yet had come

to me in life. Some wraithlike cloud of her old forebodings for a moment dimmed the luster of our joy, but with new resolve she put it away from her.

"I know that it's all nonsense," she told me firmly. "My mind knows it, that is, but there's a creepy cowardice in my blood—that is all."

I wondered what Doctor Dawson would have to say to our engagement. But nothing that he could say would matter, nothing could part us now!

As a matter of fact, he took the engagement with an air of having been long prepared for it.

"You don't astonish me, Baring," he told me, when I had laid my case before him. "I've seen how you felt for some time, and I think I have even seen how Marian felt." He sighed a little and looked into the distance. "I shall miss her. The place will be desolate without her, as it is whenever she is away. Strange how many years I got on without her—didn't want her around, in fact—and how empty the house seems now without her! Well, I can say that if she is to go away—and of course that is decreed—there is no man I would rather see her go with, Baring, than yourself. With those two girlish engagements of hers I had no sympathy. They were trivial things, unimportant, unworthy. Congratulations, my dear chap."

He put out his hand, and with a shrinking that was absurd and inexplicable, I placed mine in it and returned his hearty grasp.

I had come over from Pleasant Harbor after dinner, and we were sitting in the study, or whatever he called it, of his laboratory suite at Wildacres. He got up with a smile.

"We must celebrate this fittingly," he told me. "What will you have? I have some wonderful *crème de menthe*, kept for special occasions—not like the arsenical, chemical mixtures one buys nowadays. How about that? Or some

madeira. I don't think there's any more like it to be had."

"The liqueur, if you please," I answered. "They did me rather well at home this evening, and I won't have any wine."

I heard him moving about in the kitchenette, cracking ice, opening and shutting pantry doors. Suddenly the bell of the telephone on his table rang. I asked if I should take the call, and upon



"Marian! Marian! For God's sake——"

With a blow, he dashed the liqueur glass from her hand.

his assent, I picked up the receiver. The message proved to be for me, from my housekeeper. My lawyer was waiting for me. I had sent for him to change my will and to advise me about various investments. I called out to Dawson:

"If you don't mind, doctor, I'll defer the celebrating drink. Lee Sanders is waiting for me and is in something of a hurry. You haven't poured the sacrosanct fluid yet?"

There was a moment's pause. Finally he answered:

"No. All right, we'll drink to your happiness and Marian's another evening."

The next night he asked me to dinner. I did not want to go. The house and his housekeeper—a dreary, shabby-genteel connection of his wife's—always oppressed me. Still, I had no excuse, and I went.

The dinner was excellent. His dinners always were, drab and gloomy as was the dining room. Mrs. Holsworth was fluttering. I think she feared that her reason for existence in comparative luxury might be over when Marian removed finally from her stepfather's

house. But the small festivity proceeded without incident until we came to coffee.

"Let us have that over in my quarters," suggested Doctor Dawson. "I believe no one can make coffee—not even your excellent cook, Cousin Amelia—as I do on my little machine there. We'll take our coffee and cigars and liqueurs there, if you please, Baring. You'll come, will you not, Cousin Amelia?"

But Mrs. Holsworth was firm in the conviction that his laboratory was a sort of amateur pesthouse, from which might issue hordes of malignant disease germs. She never went near it, and she declined to go to-night.

He brewed the coffee; he privately imported all his beans from his old home in South America, and I will confess that nowhere else have I drunk such a nectar. He brought out his cordials, and a big bowl of cracked ice, and we sat, placidly smoking and talking.

"Well, I think your palate has now sufficiently lost the taste of other drinks and viands to be able to appreciate this," he said at last, turning to the bottles at his elbow.

I agreed, and he pounded the ice and half-filled two calyx-shaped glasses of exquisite Venetian ware. At that second there came a tap at the door. He scowled as he gave over his occupation, and walked toward it. He opened it with a jerk. I divined that it would go hard with the servant who had interrupted us. But at the door he gave an exclamation which I promptly echoed.

"Marian!" we cried.

She stood there, beautiful and blooming, laughter, love, gladness, in her eyes. She was still swathed in motor veils and wraps.

"They told me you were having coffee here," she said. She had given him her hand, but she was giving me her eyes, and my heart ran over with

joy. "I wanted to come home. The Dwights were motoring over from Philadelphia to-day, and on out to Rhinecliff. I was abominable to Ruth—she was having a luncheon for me to-morrow. Well, maybe I'll go back to it. But I simply had to come home to-night—had to!"

Her hand was in mine now, and I was so filled with love and adoration and happiness that my throat ached with the poignancy of my emotion.

"You'll want your dinner?" said Dawson.

"No, I've had it. The Dwights insisted upon feeling hungry in the city and we dined at the Belmont. But I'll have a cup of your wonderful coffee, doctor, if you please."

I suppose I had no eyes for him then, with Marian in the room, or at any rate no attention to give to interpreting his movements. Later, I found registered upon my mind the facts that he had continued to look gloomy and annoyed as he had poured her coffee, and that his manner was abrupt, nervous, and ungracious. But I wasn't concerned about his manner then, nor was Marian.

By the time she had finished her coffee, he was in better control of himself. He carried away the bowl of partially melted ice, poured some of the water off, and brought back more, which he pounded. He emptied the liqueur glasses and again half filled them with the snowy mass. He poured the liqueur into them and handed me one of the exquisite little toys.

"We were about to drink your happiness, my dear, yours and Baring's," he said to his stepdaughter. "We will do so now. Just a minute, Baring. I'll get some madeira for Marian. She doesn't drink these cordials."

He disappeared into the kitchenette, glass in hand. Marian and I stole a hasty embrace. When he came back, in a minute or two, she was standing a

decorous distance from me on the other side of the table. She was busily engaged in packing crushed ice into a glass.

"I'm going to have what you two are having to-night," she announced gayly, pouring a few drops of the *crème de menthe* upon the ice. "No madeira, doctor."

She raised the glass toward her lips. I followed suit, my eyes upon her.

"Marian! Marian! For God's sake!"

With a blow, he had dashed the liqueur glass from her hand. It shattered upon the floor. My own, at my very lips, was stayed. My inclination was to hurl it in his face. Instead, I set it upon the table and took a stride toward him. To fail in courtesy to Marian! I saw red. My brain did not work for a second—only my rage at seeing my beautiful girl treated with insane rudeness. Marian gazed at him in complete astonishment, her voice trembling with shock as she cried: "Doctor!"

His face was white and distorted. Great beads of sweat stood on his forehead. He looked at the tiny wreckage at his feet.

"Not you, not you!" he cried. "Oh, not you!"

And, at that, my reason resumed command of me. His words, his looks, suddenly assumed meaning, sinister meaning. All the distrust of years crystallized. I leaped to the kitchenette. There, in the little porcelain sink, lay a trickling mass of crushed ice, colored green by the fluid that had percolated through it, and on the stand beside the sink stood a liqueur glass, still moist and sticky. Doctor Schuyler Dawson had substituted another glass of *crème de menthe*, for his own consumption, for the one he had borne into the little storeroom when he had gone for Marian's madeira.

I was back upon him in another

10

bound. I had caught him by the shoulder.

"You hound, you devil!" I cried. "What is this you are trying? Marian, my dear girl, go away from here! Go over to my house, to our house—go, go!"

"No," said Marian, faintly, but determinedly.

He wrenched himself free of my clutch.

"Throw out all that stuff," he commanded me. "It's impregnated with germs—the ice. I tell you, I have frozen disease germs in that ice. Their potency will be unimpaired when they are released. Throw them out."

I fell back, shaken with horror, and even with unbelief. And in that moment, when I was paralyzed by sheer shock, he darted by me and slammed the door of the kitchenette upon himself, and in another instant a shot rang out.

Thus did Doctor Schuyler Dawson, scientist and murderer, escape the penalty for the crimes to which he had prostituted learning, talent—genius, even. For in the annals of his profession, his discoveries still entitle him to claim that quality, and the toll of the dead whom he started toward their dooms cannot alter the greatness of his services to his profession.

He had had the egoism of many great criminals. Without that quality, we should have had only surmise to guide us in our unraveling of the tale of greed and cruelty. But he had kept a careful diary during all the years of his manhood, a dairy of facts, set down with dispassionate fidelity. From that we discovered that sixteen years before, in Buenos Aires, he had administered to Ned Wheatleigh cholera germs, frozen in ice, which he used to chill cordials. He had had for his purpose the death of that rich and useless young man and the subsequent marrying of his widow.

At that period, it seems, Dawson had had no intention of further killings. He had wanted money—real money, wealth—and he had thought that, having it, he would have no further desire to slay. Wealth would free his extraordinary powers from the bondage of general practice. Wealth was all he wanted. But, having obtained it, he had found himself burdened with something for which he had cared almost as little as he had cared for crippling poverty—an exacting wife, older than himself, keenly conscious of all that her money gave to him. He had quietly rid himself of her.

Never, as it appeared, had he been the victim of any stupendous or lawless passion for women. Science had lured him—science and the means to prosecute his researches without hindrances from narrow means, from family ties, from competitive interests. Never, until his stepdaughter, Marian, had come home, had that abnormal man felt the devouring flame of human love. And then, consumed by it, he had gone on in his accustomed way—he had sought to destroy all that threatened

his wishes. One healthy body had withstood his machinations, though still he had gained his end. He had fostered in Marian the morbid distrust she had felt concerning her fate and the fate that mysteriously attended those whom she loved. Never had he faltered in his intention to render her utterly alone, save for him, until he had beheld her, all uncalculatedly, lift to her own lips the mixture that had been designed for me.

This last was but deduction, of course; there were no entries in the diary since the preceding night, when he had recorded, with terse phrases of dislike, my escape from the death that lurked in his germ-packed ice.

We threw the two estates into one, and there is a great hospital there, ministering to the needs of poor children. It is my dear wife's favorite charity—her favorite occupation, indeed. And, so strange and contradictory are the workings of our human destiny, there where his malevolent skill, his evil genius, mercilessly played a game with lives as pawns, his beneficent gifts to the world work healing every day.

THINGS I HATE ON SATURDAY

(A Little Boy's Complaint)

HELP wipe the dishes!"

"Go, sweep up that floor!"

"Do as ma wishes,

And come in from the door!"

"The coal you must carry!"

"There's wood you're to chop!"

But, gosh, when I marry,

It's going to stop!

"Dust down the banister!"

"Come, brush those back stairs!"

"Fill up the tea canister!"

"Now, straighten those chairs!"

It's "Hurry up, Harry!"

Till I'm ready to drop.

But, gosh, when I marry,

It's going to stop!

WISTY WHEELER.

Human Interest *and* the Phœbes

By Anne Spottswood Young

Author of "True Love," "The Hotel Baby," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

If you are one of the many admirers of the work of Louisa M. Alcott, you will enjoy the atmosphere of this bright story of family life.

THE Benton family, blessed with a brilliant professorial head, was not correspondingly supplied with currency bearing the indorsement of Uncle Sam. Their worldly income was apt to stand in inverse ratio to their mental equipment. With care, they had enough to make both ends meet, but—to quote Paula's words—not enough to tie those same ends in a satisfactory bowknot. It was for the sake of adding long loops and sash streamers to the family life that Paula undertook story writing in earnest, and held fast through many vicissitudes. Her efforts in fiction, at first referred to as potboilers, soon were dubbed "P. B.'s" by Bess, and changed to "Phœbes" by Jack, and as such remained in the annals of the family.

Absorbed in her latest Phœbe, "The Pride of Priscilla," Paula ran downstairs one bright October morning, to be met at the library door by an impatient query from her younger sister.

"Paula, where is my essay? Why can't the family let my things alone? Miss Adams is on the rampage at school, and she said positively our class couldn't have its annual nutting party unless all the essays were in on time this month. And, oh, Paula darling, you know Tom has asked me to go with him this year, and I must find it—I just must!"

With difficulty Paula came out of cloudland, peopled with "Priscilla" and her coterie, into a world of reality.

"I'll find the essay," she soothed. "Go tell Minerva to give you your breakfast while I hunt."

"There isn't any breakfast!" wailed Bess. "Our goddess hasn't shown up. Her aunt must be worse!"

As housekeeper for a motherless flock, Paula's heart sank. Minerva had not come and there was no breakfast! To offset that news, the clamoring of Priscilla was insistent, and in the young writer's keen disappointment that no work could be accomplished that day, Bess' tripping words now fell on unheeding ears, though Paula entered the library and began a systematic search for the lost essay.

"I've looked through all those papers! It isn't there! Goodness, you can't take two steps in this house without stumbling over a pile of Daddy Professor's bugology magazines! If I were you, Paula, some day when he isn't home I'd throw out about 'steen dozen of them and——"

"Throw out *what*? Oh, Paula, daughter, you're not destroying any of my papers, are you?"

Utter dismay was in the voice, and the girls looked around to see their father and their two brothers standing in the doorway. Bess and the boys laughed at their father's words with the amusement people show at an oft-told, but funny story or the witty lines of a familiar play. Paula neither laughed nor paused in her search. She answered calmly, though a bit wearily, as

if she knew by experience that her denial would have no reassuring effect:

"No, father, I never throw out *anything* without asking you first."

"But, my dear child! All of those magazines are valuable! I cannot spare one of them! Only last night I found an interesting treatise written by an unknown youngster just entering the entomological field. He contends that he has found a new genus of mosquito, but I judge from his description that

his new genus is the female of a well-known species, and I intend to take the matter up with him. Kiss your father good morning, girls, and Paula, daughter, how about breakfast? I worked very late last night and feel the need of my coffee."

Professor Benton crossed the room and kissed his daughters affectionately, but a little absently, his shrewd, kindly glance still bent upon Paula as she continued to rummage through his treasures. Jack linked his arm in his father's and bent over him teasingly.

"Remember, Daddy Professor, 'the female of the species is more deadly than the male.' You keep your eye on Paula! Don't you let her throw out your valuable material. I need those magazines to improve the variety and range of my choice of words when I



"Ah—the essay!" Jack placed the tip of one finger to his forehead, and struck the attitude he was wont to designate as "Thought."

hit my shins in the dark. *Only last night*"—cleverly imitating his father's tone—"I had a rare opportunity to use my rich and fluent insect vocabulary. *Heliophila unipuncta! Diabrotica longicornis!* But it did hurt!"

In the laughter that followed, Joe, the oldest and most serious of the professor's quartet, did not join, unless a melancholy smile could be counted in his favor. He was occupying his first position since graduation from college, and was eager to be off.

"What are you looking for?" he asked. "Isn't breakfast ready?"

Joe addressed his questions to Paula, but received his answers from Bess.

"No, Merry Sunshine, breakfast isn't ready! Minerva hasn't descended from Mount Olympus. Her distaff we will all have to ply together this morning. 'Meantime the gracious dawn displays to wretched men her genial ways and calls to work once more!' The *Æneid*, Book Eleven! In the pure English of our goddess, 'there ain't goin' to be no breakfast!' As for what we are hunting, I've lost my essay. It has a blue cover on it. Daddy Professor, you didn't dissect it for a blue-tailed dragon fly, did you?"

"No—no—no!" answered the professor abstractedly. "I did not, Bess! I did not!" He selected a magazine from a high pile near Paula, opened it to the mosquito article that had attracted her attention, and growled good-naturedly to himself, "Cleverly written, but he's wrong! He's wrong!"

Jack stretched, yawned, and grinned appreciatively at the family group. He was enjoying a prolonged summer vacation, owing to an epidemic of measles that had taken possession of his college town, and was of too easy-going a disposition to be unduly disturbed by the nervous atmosphere of the household. Languidly, with the air of a tolerant summer boarder, he picked up the morning paper and asked:

"Can't somebody make coffee, fry some bacon, and cook some cereal or eggs or something?"

"Somebody?" snapped Paula. "That's me!" sacrificing grammar for effect. "I can't do everything at once!"

"Nobody wants you to, daughter. Nobody wants you to," said the professor in a tone meant to be soothing, instinctively feeling that Paula was irritated and the house not running smoothly, but not taking in any of the details of the situation. "But wouldn't it be wiser, child, to have breakfast *first*, and attend to all these other things"—with a vague wave of the magazine—"afterward, daughter dear?"

Paula bit her lip without reply.

"'Daughter dear' responds pleasantly to father's timely suggestion regarding breakfast," murmured Jack, and Paula gave a little protesting laugh and turned to him appealingly.

"Jack, don't you know where the essay is? Everything will stay at sixes and sevens till I find it."

"Ah—the essay!" Jack placed the tip of one finger to his forehead, and struck the attitude he was wont to designate as "Thought."

"You have it!" accused Bess, dancing in front of him like an avenging Indian squaw.

He deftly caught her wrists and held them in an athletic grip.

"Calm thyself, little spitfire! The azure-bound essay reposes on my white-and-gold bed, near the crimson bath robe, flung with an eye to harmony of color across the footboard of the couch on which I slumber!"

"Oh, Jack!" cried exasperated Paula, adding, "I'll get it, Bess!" and darting for the stairway.

When she returned with the essay, giving it to Bess without comment, she found the family walking about the kitchen with that same restlessness exhibited by animals at the zoo just before

feeding time. The air was vibrant with nervousness, and they had all assumed the repressed manner peculiar to even the most loving of families when the cook fails to appear on a busy morning. There was a note of strained patience in the voice of Bess as she examined the cupboard, and announced, "Say, Paula, there are only four eggs left!" The endurance of a martyr was evident in her father's comment as he fussed over the ice box, "I'd speak to Minerva about this, daughter. She forgets constantly to empty the drippings from this pan! The water will be all over the floor in another hour."

He was correct in his surmise, save as to the length of time that would elapse before the kitchen was flooded. In stooping to lift the big pan that held the ice drippings, Professor Benton slipped and the pan flew from his hands with a resounding bang, scattering cold water in all directions. Joe and Jack sprang for the mop, and slip-slopped it ineffectually over the floor, amid peals of unfilial laughter. Professor Benton stood still, looking the picture of distress, and Paula, with an affectionate shove, pushed him toward the dining-room door, uttering a little laugh that sounded dangerously near a sob. Then she turned wrathfully on the others:

"All of you but Joe, go on out! Bess and Jack, if you really want to be useful, you can set the table. If you don't want to help, go into the library and twirl your thumbs, but, whatever you do, keep out of the road! Daddy Professor"—to her father, hovering uncertainly in the doorway—"I'll call you as soon as breakfast is ready. Tell that female mosquito, when you meet her, how lucky she is not to have to cook her meals!"

The swinging door, to Paula's relief, promptly closed on three-fifths of the family. Their manner was a funny mixture of anger, hauteur, and amusement, for Paula's rare outbursts were

never altogether devoid of humor. Joe's irritation vanished as he picked up the four eggs to drop them into boiling water, for he had caught a glimpse of a tear on Paula's cheek.

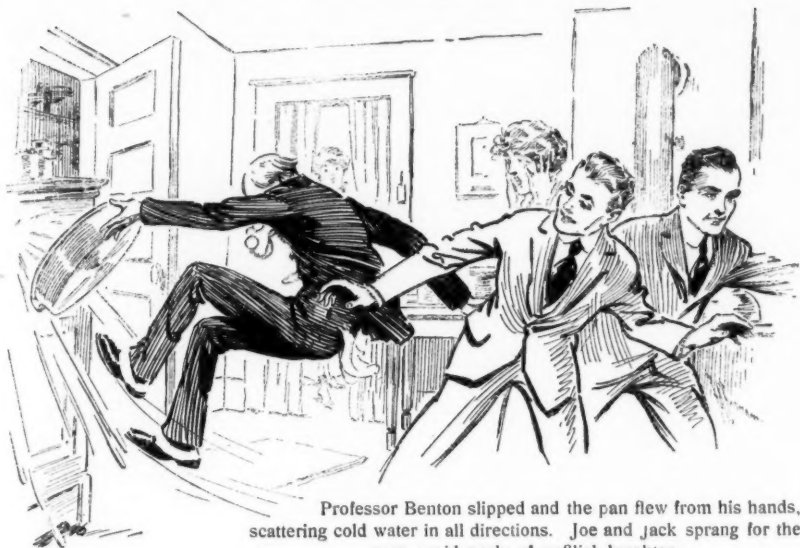
"Oh, I say!" he exclaimed in remorseful sympathy. "You were in the mood to write on 'Priscilla' to-day, weren't you? That's too bad!"

"Never mind," returned Paula. But when he came near, she snuggled her head on his shoulder. "I'll never succeed, Joe, never! Writing and house-keeping don't go together! They just don't, that's all! Stirring scenes and string beans! Pot roasts and 'Prides of Priscillas!' Boiled eggs and——"

Joe threw a comforting arm about her, and as he did so, one of the eggs flew from his grasp as if directed by the unerring aim of a star baseball pitcher. Instantly the windowpane became the canvas for a remarkable painting, in which—to use the phraseology of art catalogues—the brighter color predominated. Curiously enough, this incident acted as a counterirritant to Paula, and, clinging to Joe, who was proudly murmuring, "I'm a Cubist!" she went into a mild and saving attack of hysterics. Her brother patted her rapidly on the back, the only cure for hysterics known to the masculine mind, and was laughingly dismissed to the dining room with the three remaining eggs, which had done their best to boil hard in the interval.

A little later, a very different Paula faced her household with conciliatory offerings of hot toast, steaming coffee, and sizzling bacon. "Our late unpleasantness"—Jack's term for family disagreements—according to an unwritten Benton law, was not again referred to, and all spirits rose accordingly. The reins were once more in Paula's hands, but in the struggle to regain her equipoise, the clamorings of Priscilla were stilled.

The family scattered. Minerva's



Professor Benton slipped and the pan flew from his hands, scattering cold water in all directions. Joe and Jack sprang for the mop, amid peals of unfilial laughter.

small, sniffing son arrived with no handkerchief and a much misspelled note. The latter informed Paula that the "sick ant" was "took bad," and that Minerva would come the next day, if she could, or, as Paula finally deciphered, "I will cum if I can and if I cant I cant." The messenger of the "goddess," made happy by a big orange, began to suck it industriously, his efforts in this direction, added to the inconvenience of his physical condition, turning him into such a leaky little human bellows that Paula in desperation bestowed her fine handkerchief upon him as a sop to his manifold woes. His departure seemed the signal for interruptions from butcher, baker, and candlestick maker, and it was not until late afternoon that Paula sat down before her typewriter, in the little alcove off her bedroom, and ran light fingers over the keyboard.

"A poor day for the Phœbes!" she admitted ruefully, and shook her head hopelessly as an importunate "family

ring" at the doorbell called her away once more, ere she could write a word. Jack and Bess blew breezily in together, their hands filled with flat packages that bore the unmistakable earmarks of contributions "returned with thanks."

"Just look at the darling birds returning on wings of love to the home nest!" cried Bess, her cheeks rosy, her hair loosened about her face in soft tendrils. "Wouldn't you like to wring their dear little necks? Talk about the remarkable traits of homing pigeons! One Phœbe makes a homing pigeon look like a cock sparrow! I was perfectly certain the mailman would have a lot of cheerful dope for this house to-day!"

The professor, who had a weird instinct about the arrival of the postman, mysteriously appeared, apparently from nowhere, for Paula had not known that he was in the house, confiscated his personal letters, and disappeared again without creating a ripple on the household lake, interest centering on the

Phœbes. Jack and Bess carried the manuscripts upstairs, dumped them on Paula's desk, and rapidly ripped open the envelopes, quoting in tragic tones from the printed slips that accompanied them:

"Inability to make use of manuscript does not in any sense imply lack of merit!"

"Regret that it does not seem exactly suited to our needs!"

Suddenly Bess straightened in indignation.

"Listen to this, will you! Harken to the printed words that are sent with Paula's 'Sunset!' 'It is suggested that contributors familiarize themselves with the aims and policy of the magazine by reading it from month to month.' And this to us! Why, we've had that magazine ever since it first started! I'd take out that phrase if I were the editor. It wounds a loving contributor to the heart! It cuts me to the soul! I got the idea for my frilly pink muslin out of its illustrious pages—Tom still *raves* about that dress—and because of the sensation that gown made, three other girls in the academy subscribed! It wouldn't have hurt the editor to take 'Sunset,' Paula, after your sister has been a walking advertisement for them! Oh, but this is one unappreciative world!"

Jack regarded the printed slips, each one worded more politely than the last; then uttered a ringing laugh that brought a sympathetic smile to the face of Daddy Professor, peacefully perusing his mail in the laboratory.

"Say, girls, do you remember, when Aunt Elizabeth was taking care of us, how she drowned the rat we caught in the trap and kept saying so sweetly, 'Yes, you shall be drowned in nice, warm water because it's such a cold day!' The editors are certainly drowning you in 'nice, warm water' lately, Paula! Oh, hello! Wait a minute! Here's a postscript on the other side of

this slip, in the editor's handwriting, evidently!"

Paula looked up eagerly. Bess laid aside her languid, crushed air. Postscripts were apt to be messages of hope when brought back in the bills of home-coming Phœbes. Jack read aloud:

"DEAR MISS BENTON: We like your work very much, and return 'Conquering a Coquette' with real regret. Will you not let us see other of your stories along similar lines, but with more of what we term *human interest* in the tale?"

There was silence for a moment; then the trio asked simultaneously:

"What is human interest?"

"Well, whatever it is, we'll just have to get it for him, if he wants it!" said Bess practically. "Goodness knows, we got *subtly* down to the finest kind of a point last winter! The smartest editor living could not have understood 'Moonlight Mirage.' Do you remember, Paula, how you fixed the last sentence so you didn't understand it yourself? It never sold, but it was the best example of *subtly* I ever saw! As for *local color*, you should have read 'Harvester Hans,' Jack! Say, Paula, by the way, this same editor has 'Harvester Hans!' He doesn't mention it, does he?"

"He probably hasn't read it yet."

"Probably. But what a shame he has it! It was full of *local color*, and he particularly says he wants *human interest*! There's no use in offering a man ice cream if he has set his heart on a hot Phœbe and a cold——"

"Local color!" prompted Jack.

"Oh, yes, local color! We ran that down while you were camping this summer," explained Bess. "We spent a whole scorching August day out in the fields talking to Billy Burnley, pretending to catch insects and take notes for Daddy Professor, but really taking down all the funny, sad things Billy said to us. He made us want to laugh and cry both. He worked seven years

to make money enough to bring his sweetheart over from the other side! What do you think of that for playing the part of Jacob? When he told us about finally meeting her at the steamer, we sat down on the ground and lifted up our voices and wept!"

"Bess!" objected Paula.

"And when we got home," continued Bess, warming to her theme, "our local color was as lurid as our poor faces and arms. It was torture for Paula to run the typewriter, but she had to, or lose all she had gained. Local color is so apt to fade overnight, you know. No one but us would recognize Billy Burnley as 'Harvester Hans,' but he's there, and so is the local color, believe me! Human interest is different, because we don't know whether to look for radishes or pink elephants. Say, Jack, didn't that awfully tall college chum of yours take a prize once for human interest in a cover design for a magazine?"

"'String' Longman? That's right! I'd forgotten! Girl, man, and chaperon sitting out a dance. The man by mistake has gotten hold of the chaperon's hand and the pretty girl, all dolled up in party togs, is moping forlornly, while the man and chaperon are blissful. The editors wrote String that it was the touch of *human interest*, as well as the good work, that made him the winner, but, bless you, he didn't know what they meant! He just happened to hit the bull's eye by firing at a stray calf!"

Paula, laughing, began to replace the returned Phœbes in her desk drawer, Bess regarding her with the detached air she sometimes assumed when busied with her own line of thought.

"Speaking of radishes and pink elephants," said the younger sister, "and not wishing to change the subject abruptly, I'd like to respectfully inquire if Dorwin is coming home for the weekend as usual?"

The desk drawer sticking a little, Paula banged it shut, suddenly irritated, not with Bess, but with herself and at the color she felt rising to her cheeks. To her relief, when she looked up, Bess was innocently arranging pencils and blotters in order, and Jack was unconcernedly picking out a tune on the typewriter as if it were a piano; so it was easy to reply:

"Yes, I had a note from him yesterday, saying he was coming."

Bess yawned as if she scarcely heard, and Paula left the room, exclaiming at the lateness of the hour and the pressing need of her services in the kitchen. Why should such a simple query upset her? Paula put the question to herself with renewed impatience. Dorwin had been coming home—to see his parents—every week since he had accepted a position in his alma mater, not far away. They were next-door neighbors, had known each other from babyhood. There could not have been any undercurrent of meaning in Bess' question, yet when the younger girl followed her into the kitchen caroling, "My heart is with Ben, for he's coming again," Paula glanced at her with suspicion. The expression on Bess' face, however, was one rarely seen except on the countenance of a two-year-old infant, and her first words were disarming, for she did not mention Dorwin again.

"Say, Paula, I've figured out human interest!"

"Proceed!" laughed Paula in relief.

"Take String Longman's picture—holding hands with the wrong person. Everybody understood it—that's why it was full of human interest. Do you remember how Daddy Professor chuckled when he saw it—Daddy Professor, mind you, with all the letters of the alphabet strung after his name! What are you going to have for dinner? I'll peel the potatoes. And Cicily Crossman? How Jack can waste so much

time over her is beyond me! If you took a cat's brains and divided them into three parts like All Gaul, any one part would show you Cicily's capacity for appreciating art. Yet she understood that picture, too, in her own way. Cicily said in that sweet, doll-baby drawl of hers, 'Ah, say, ain't that a shame, though?' Where is the little sharp knife? And Tom said, *catch* him any old time mixing up *his* girl's hands with a chaperon's!

"No, he didn't say that, either,



Dorwin laughed, snatched off his cap, and waved it enthusiastically in response to a farewell signal from Bess.

Paula! I'll be honest with you, to help you out! Tom said he could tell my hands blindfolded from the hands of a million chaperons, and he thought that fellow was an awful duffer to make such a mistake! Don't preach to me, Paula! If you do, I'll never help you with your stories again. Honestly, Tom has never touched my hands except when we are dancing, or when he's helping me over logs and fences, but he isn't blindfolded, and he can't help having 'eyes that see.'"

"Eyes that see!" mused Paula, suddenly reading a new meaning into the familiar phrase and looking at Bess for the first time as possible "copy."

"Even Minerva understood that picture," declared Bess, harking back to human interest. "She was best of all. Do you want these potatoes cut up? Of course Minerva knows more about artichokes than art, but just the same, she hit the nail on the head, too. She

waved the rolling pin in my face, and said, 'That's the time a pretty girl gits left, Miss Bess! That's a widder lady a-chap-eronin' her! Don't you never let no widder lady beat your time! Ain't that mean now, cradle-snitchin' like that! Run, run, child, when you see a widder lady comin'!'"

Amid peals of laughter, preparations for the evening meal continued. At the table Professor Benton asked if Dorwin was expected home the next morning, and Paula nodded, again

feeling a strange hesitancy in answering. His note had not only said definitely that he was coming, but it had told her of extra good luck, if the results of Dorwin's hard and expert work could be called luck. He had been offered a better position in the college, with a very substantial raise in salary and a fine opportunity for rapid advancement and travel. Paula tried to announce this news casually, in the tone in which one usually relates kindly neighborhood gossip, but the right tone was clearly off duty. The words would not come, and she remained silent, heartily wishing that no one would ever mention Dorwin's name to her again. Daddy Professor, however, was difficult to switch off a theme that had caught his interest—hence his fame for accuracy as an entomologist.

"I'm very glad he is coming," he announced, gazing at Paula fondly over his glasses. "He and I have been planning to take a spin up Mascot Hill for specimens. I have feared for some time that Dorwin was losing his keen interest in entomology. That's the trouble when one makes a specialty of another subject. I am still disappointed that he did not join our ranks, but I have been noticing lately that his interest is returning. He came over here at least a dozen times last week while he was home, to consult my books. I believe you helped him in his research work, Paula, daughter? He says my books are finer than anything to be found at the public library."

Paula flushed a soft shell pink and kept her eyes on her plate.

"His love for entomology is only exceeded by his devotion to his parents," volunteered Bess in a tone of liquid sweetness, practicing a baby stare upon her father with telling effect.

He rose to the bait.

"Isn't it *beautiful*?" beamed the professor.

"Beautiful!" echoed Joe and Jack,

like well-trained parrots, while Paula sat in silence, not daring to look up.

"Paula, daughter," proceeded the professor, "just mention to Dorwin, will you, if you happen to see him first, that I will plan to take that trip with him early in the day? We might get up a little party of young folks," he added in his kindly way. "Himes Brothers' machine would hold seven, and Dorwin would lend his little car, I am sure, which would accommodate two more. It would be a shame to miss such a ride."

It *would* be a shame to miss it. Dorwin had used those very words in writing to Paula, but Himes Brothers' machine, accommodating seven, had not figured in his plan.

Paula assisted in the preparations for the ride with forced cheerfulness, almost hoping it would rain. The next day, however, promised to be more perfect for such an outing than the previous one had been, with less chill in the air and more warmth in the sunshine. Dorwin arrived, bubbling over with gayety, and met the waiting "surprise party" with every courteous indication of delight, after a moment of hastily concealed dismay. His greeting to Paula was very brief and absorbed, and he promptly devoted his entire attention to Bess. Paula, striving to hide her disappointment and heartache, not having an opportunity to explain, hurrying to and fro, putting finishing touches to lunch baskets, gathering up rugs and wraps, suddenly realized that the confusion about her had ceased. Himes Brothers' automobile chugged up to the house, and amid gay-shouts, Daddy Professor was ushered into the tonneau. Bess and Tom, Joe and Jack—each with a pretty girl in tow—tumbled in after him and were bowled away at high speed. Dorwin's pretty car stood at the door, purring its eagerness to be off, and Paula asked, with a pleasure she could not hide:

"Oh, are *we* going in that?"

"We are, Paula!"

"Hurry, then," urged the girl, feeling unaccountably panic-stricken. "We all want to keep together."

"Oh, do we?" leisurely drawing on his gloves.

"Don't we?" responded puzzled Paula.

"See here, Paula! I hope Daddy Professor will forgive me, but we are not going to Mascot Hill to-day—at least you and I are not! We're going to take the Cliff Drive."

"That takes all day and the others have the lunch!"

Dorwin laughed, snatched off his cap, and waved it enthusiastically in response to a farewell signal from Bess, as the big automobile rounded a bend in the road. Then he smiled quizzically.

"Our *lunch*, Paula, if that is what is worrying you, is ordered at the Cliff House! I managed to telephone up without any of the bunch hearing me, thanks to Bess. I hope I'll have a chance to help her out some day! She's one great kid, she is!"

"Oh!" said Paula faintly, not understanding entirely, but quite happy as she gave herself up to a day of Dorwin's planning.

Evening shades enveloped the Benton home when the smaller car with its two occupants returned. Lights shining from the windows and shouts of gay laughter from within indicated that the family had come back. Paula remembered that she had not planned for their supper, but with a dreamy dismay, for she was still in the clouds, where nothing was very distinct except that Dorwin loved her, always had loved her, always would love her, and never, never had loved any other girl! The machine glided under a great tree near the house and paused.

"I'll see you again to-night?" asked Dorwin gently.

"Yes—but don't come in now, dear!

A little later, perhaps! I must get used to it! It has almost frightened me—not your love for me, but mine for you! It's all so wonderful, and I didn't know I cared till to-day, but I do, I do!"

The drooping branches of the tree hid them for a moment, in the faithful, loyal fashion of big trees since the world began. Then Paula slipped out of Dorwin's arms and ran into the house like a little light shadow. To her room she went as if bewitched, for the Phœbes were calling as they had never called before. Switching on the light, taking time to remove only hat and gloves, and without waiting to take off her long cloak, Paula drew out "The Pride of Priscilla" from her desk and began to work at her typewriter with swiftly flying fingers. She was Priscilla now, not Paula, Priscilla meeting her lover in the glory of the summer moonlight, battling for the last time with her besetting sin of false pride. She was all girls in one to-night, with Dorwin's first kisses on her lips, Dorwin's tender, impassioned words ringing in her ears. Nothing of what he said went down upon the rapidly filling pages, but the soul of it all went into her story. The words tripped off her fingers as if by magic till the last syllable was written and "The Pride of Priscilla" was finished. Silently, then, Paula sat at her machine, her heart singing to the old tune, ever new, of love unfathomable, love unbelievable. Two soft arms stole about her neck, and Bess was beside her.

"Oh, Paula, *tell* me about it!"

"The story, dear?" asked Paula dazedly. "You can read it yourself. I hardly know what I have said, but I know it is right, at *last*!"

"Yes, I know it is right, too! Haven't I been keeping everybody away till you finished it? But, Paula darling, it's *the* story I want to hear—not about Priscilla, but about you and Dorwin!"

"Dorwin! How did you know?"

"We all knew! Everybody knew but you and Daddy Professor! Oh, my dear, Dorwin was *frantic* when he heard about the party to Mascot Hill! I helped him out! I meant to all along, anyway. You'll never know the time we had with Daddy Professor! He was sure there was some mistake, and I didn't dare tell him the real situation! He mourned for Dorwin all day like a baby crying for its bottle, though we fairly *fed* him gnats and grubs and beetles and cocoons during the whole trip to make up. Tom was such a help, and I never had more fun in my life! Tell me, dearest beloved, *did* he kiss you? And what *did* he say?"

Bess did not wait for answers, but flew on:

"I've whipped up the best supper you ever saw, considering we had nothing in the house! Paula surely forgot to put the kettle on this day, but I've been Johnny-on-the-spot, believe me! And Tom's downstairs, and so is Dorwin."

"Dorwin! He went home!"

"The cat came back! He and Tom are going to stay for supper. Dearie, you have an awful lot to learn about love, in spite of your stories. Did you think he had gone home to sit *with his parents and study entomology* till you sent for him? Paula, how beautiful you are, even with all this dust on you! Freshen up, and come down right away! We have the grandest news for you! And Daddy Professor wants to say, 'Blessings, my children.' He was so *sweet*, and Dorwin nearly wrung his hand off, and we all behaved like hoodlums, and you never even heard! Dorwin kissed me the moment he came in—right before *Tom*, too," with a rippling laugh, "so of course I knew it was all settled! I'm *crazy* about the way he kisses a girl, aren't you? But the news, Paula, the news! 'Harvester Hans'—"

"Has it come back again, dear? I don't care! Nothing matters to-night!"

"No, but it isn't back, Paula! We opened the envelope, Jack and Joe and I. We knew you wouldn't care if we did! The Phœbes belong to us, too! We were afraid it was just a letter saying they couldn't take it, and were returning it under separate cover! If it had been bad news, we were going to keep it till to-morrow, but it's good news! The editor has accepted it, and he says it has *oodles and snoodles of human interest* in it, or words to that effect! He didn't mention *local color*, after all our work! Isn't that a blow? But I must say, the big check—wait till you see it!—lessens the shock! It was *human interest* we caught that day in the fields with Billy Burnley, and we didn't know it! Didn't I tell you that was a bird of a Phœbe? Well, will you listen to Dorwin calling you? Wouldn't you think he owned you?"

Bess floated away on tiptoe, and Paula turned off the light, opened the window, and stood looking into the great calm of the heavens. Filled with a new, deep tenderness for her dear ones, enraptured with love for Dorwin, there suddenly came to her a marvelous understanding. This elusive something that the editors wanted—call it by what name they would—she had stumbled upon in the simple heart history of Billy Burnley. There was no more need to search for human interest than to hunt for the glorious October air that filled her lungs on this wonderful night. It would thrill through all her great experiences just as it was thrilling through this perfect hour of love and happiness, but it lurked also, as she now knew, in the simplest of household happenings. Her days of interruptions had been full to overflowing with story lore, and she had been blind amid treasure.

"Human interest!" whispered radiant Paula, to the single bright star gazing down upon her. "Human interest! It's only another name for life!"

Fifty-Fifty

By Lyon Mearson

ONCE upon a time a man searched for a perfect wife. His friends and relatives argued with him, but to no avail; then they laughed at him, with the natural result that he became more obstinate on the matter. They pointed out to him that there could no more be a perfect wife than there could be a perfect vacuum—a thing that has been given up as a hopeless affair by science. They pointed out to him that if there could be such a thing as a perfect woman, who could become a perfect wife, he would not recognize her as such when he met her, et cetera ad infinitum.

He remarked that he Came from Missouri, and that He Should Worry, and mentioned other interesting slang of the day, all tending to demonstrate that he proposed to pursue the uneven tenor of his way until he found the one woman, the perfect woman who would make the perfect wife.

Many girls were surreptitiously examined and inspected by Our Hero. Always, however, something was lacking. Once there was a girl of whom he had high hopes until he discovered that she believed Bernard Shaw. Another time there was a girl—she never knew how close she came—but he discovered that she smacked her lips when she kissed. Another girl misused the words "liable" and "apt," and still another had a leaning toward Flivver carlets, and when he discovered that a girl whom he was really beginning to like read the *Evening Journal*—well, he

almost lay down on the job and began to listen to his relatives and friends with something approximating a sane gleam in his eyes.

He had about decided to make some worthy girl happy by marrying her and training her to be perfect when the Unbelievable happened. He met a perfect woman.

She was beautiful as the dawn of an Indian summer day; her features were of the classic Greek regularity that he desired; her skin was clear and of wondrous softness; her eyes had the light of young romance in their changing depths. He had found out that she was averse to napkin rings and that she thought that rouge was something used only by wicked actresses; that she did not care for Harold Bell Wright or Harry B. Smith, and had never been to the Hippodrome or the Aquarium in her life and had no intention of ever going; that she did not— Oh, pshaw, that she was *Perfect*.

Realizing, with deep thanksgiving, that his long and apparently hopeless search had finally come to an end, he joyfully took up the matter in hand and proposed to her.

She turned him down, confiding to him that she was looking for the Perfect Man.

Moral: It is no part of affection to be seeking perfection in others.

Alternate Moral: It's a poor marriage that doesn't work both ways.



Matronly Beauty

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

IT is generally conceded that woman ages more rapidly than man, although statistics show that she lives longer, not only in actual experiences, but in length of years. Now, as a matter of fact, there is only one period when she is at a disadvantage in this respect, and that is from forty to fifty. Having successfully passed this period, she is given a new lease on life, as it were, and can not only resume her former activities with the same youthful enthusiasm and vigor that characterized her in earlier years, but if she has kept abreast of the times, she can put into those activities the ripened thought and philosophy which she has acquired during the transitional period when her physical condition prevented her from sharing in the life of those around her.

At one time it was believed that savage women and those living in a primitive state were exempt from the sufferings that so largely accompany the physiological processes through which every woman must pass when she reaches the forties, and that, in consequence, what physical attractions they possess were heightened, like the rose, by full maturity. This is so far from being the case, however, that civilization, by its drain upon our physical resources, seems to act as a spur to

heighten the lure of woman, while in her free and native state she fades into an unattractive and often hideous old age with the passing of her youth.

The return of many women of fifty or thereabouts to public life from the obscurity into which their physical disabilities forced them has lately been openly commented upon. Many stage names with which we were on pleasantly intimate terms ten years ago, and which we frequently recalled with a sigh, have reappeared, their owners charming us anew with a polish that their art lacked in earlier years. So it should be with every woman who faces the problem of middle age and waning youth.

Matured beauty is, after all, a matter of individual heritage and intelligent care. Nature does not deal equally with every woman as she passes her fortieth milestone. Those who, through ignorance, carelessness, unhappiness, domestic cares, and so forth, have neglected themselves not only look their years, but often appear older than they are; on the other hand, freedom from care, with the daily determination to preserve one's youth, enables others at forty to pass for twenty-five. Then there is the matter of inherited qualities—of charm, of vigor, of spirit, call them what you will—that "run" in

some families, which preserve the youthful attributes and looks of their members into a delightful old age.

We are, however, concerned here principally with the body, and the first thing that strikes us upon contemplation of the woman of forty is her matronly form. Not only is this evident in her build, but it is apparent in her actions, her walk, her general attitude. If she has been careless, neglectful of her digestion and the elimination of toxic products, she will have become grosser, heavier; her complexion will have lost every vestige of youthfulness and have settled into a dark or at least yellowish tone; her joints will have lost the elasticity of youth, not alone from disuse, but from deposits left there by a sluggish circulation. All the functions of the body will be performed at a slower rate than when she was twenty years younger. Therefore oxidation, or the burning-up process that rids the system of excess tissue, will be but feebly performed, and so weight will be taken on, often where it shows most and to the least advantage.

Notably have the muscles of the entire body and of the ligamentous tissues that bind the bones and muscles together been shorn gradually of that quality that enables them to preserve the beautiful outlines of youth. *It is the passing away of these outlines that brings despair to the heart of middle age!*

When Ethel Barrymore returned to the stage last winter, after having appeared for several seasons so matronly in form that her most gushing girl admirers no longer cared to emulate her mannerisms, her audiences gasped at the transformation she had undergone. Lo, the matron had vanished, and the young, slender Ethel Barrymore of yesteryear had returned. True, still in the thirties, she was able readily to rid herself of the redundancy that clothed her like a superfluous garment, to step

out of it in all her pristine beauty. But this is precisely what most women, on going through the child-bearing period, *do not do*. They allow the maturity that is an inseparable part of motherhood to linger, to weigh them down, to age them prematurely. Yet one can be none the less a successful mother by remaining "one of the girls."

The matronly figure is first observable in the waistline. Many women ward off the approach of age here until well into the forties, but thickness through the diaphragm need *never* become apparent if the digestive processes are actively kept up and deep fresh-air breathing is practiced as part of the daily routine. The diaphragm is the great muscle of respiration that separates the organs of the abdomen from those of the chest, and when performing its duties, it acts as a bellows, especially upon the liver and the digestive organs, keeping the fires there at a steady glow and thus preventing the accumulation of waste. When these facts are borne in mind and acted upon, the waist remains trim and youthful throughout life.

Just so with the back, another absolute signpost of maturity after thirty-five, unless habits of correct posture are cultivated before the vertebræ *set*, before the shoulders become rounded or bowed down or thickened with pad-dings of fat. Why do most women give so little thought to the back? One may safely say that if its youthful contour is maintained, the rest of the body will inevitably fall into desirable lines. This of course can be accomplished only by means of persistent exercise. The woman who loves and indulges her ease overmuch must expect to become heavy-set and show every year of her age throughout the entire length of her back. On the other hand, sixty years still finds some women with elastic step and the gracefully swaying, slender silhouette of youth.

Exercises conducive to this enviable physical state have been entered into so completely in recent articles as to require no repetition here.

While a heavy-set, mature figure is often the result of years of careless indulgence, it is also often a heritage, in which case it is difficult to remold, and it is, too, largely a matter of temperament. This is a loose term often loosely applied. It is used here to indicate a condition of the mind. A pleasant outlook on life, contentment with the niche in which one is placed, an optimistic viewpoint, a high belief in the ultimate goodness and sincerity of all things—this condition, more succinctly expressed as a "sunny nature," will preserve the body from that heaviness which is the death knell of all grace.

Now we have reached a point that is of supreme importance to the matron, and that is *grace*. Graceful lines cannot be cultivated—one either possesses them or one does not, as they belong to one's physique—but grace of motion is a quality possible to every woman who desires to replace the mere prettiness of youth with the beauty of rhythm, poise, balance, self-control; and this

hint of grace can be *acquired* only through years of conscious effort. We forgive a pretty girl the awkwardness displayed by nervous haste and useless expenditure of energy; we smile indulgently and assign it to the "impatience

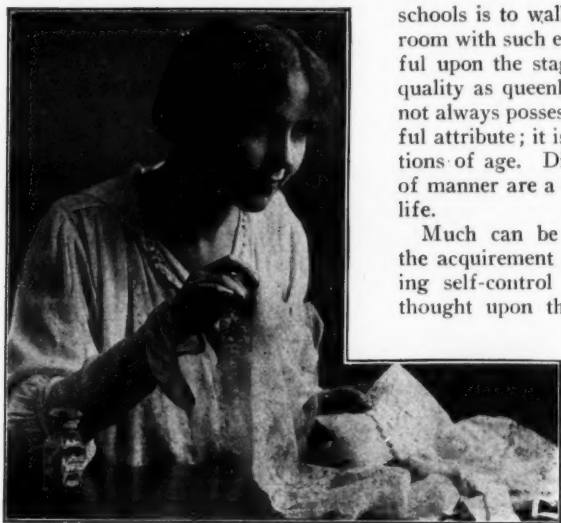
of youth." Whereas the hurried actions of a matured woman display an agitation and a habit of mind that have nothing in common with composure and that, be she ever so good looking or so handsomely gowned, is in sharp contrast to the cultivated repose of manner so beautiful in a woman.

Many stage aspirants never "get on" because they cannot acquire rhythmical movements. The entire lack of graceful motion in the average woman is painfully shown on the screen. The following story is told of a prominent actor, in this connection. He is a handsome man who years ago won his histrionic spurs and only lately

outlived his reputation as *matinée* idol. At an enormous salary, he consented to appear in the "movies." After a while, the fact leaked out that he did not screen well. Picture after picture was taken, and at length the plan had to be given up entirely, for the simple reason that this actor absolutely could not



How fatal to beauty and good taste is this back view!



Her laces breathe a haunting perfume.

acquire that control over his coördinated movements so essential to the perfection of a high-class picture drama. This defect in him was never observed on the spoken stage, but was revealed by the camera, and it was a defect that he was unable to overcome—at his age!

This points a tremendous lesson to all women desirous of appearing attractive, for no matter how commonplace the features may be, if in speech and action a woman is musical—that is, possessed of *rhythm*—if every movement of her body, every poise of her head, every gesture, is pleasing, she possesses a charm that "age cannot wither nor custom stale." If not naturally endowed with so superlative a quality, one should cultivate it to the best of one's ability, and every mother owes her daughter the opportunities that a course of training in the art of using her body gracefully will give her.

It has always been said that the most difficult thing to teach girls at dramatic

schools is to walk the length of a ballroom with such ease as to appear graceful upon the stage. We speak of this quality as queenly, but even queens do not always possess it. It is not a youthful attribute; it is one of the compensations of age. Dignity, ease, and grace of manner are a concomitant of middle life.

Much can be accomplished toward the acquirement of "grace" by practicing self-control and concentration of thought upon the execution of a coördinated set of movements. That is why neurologists advocate *knitting* for those whose nerves are in a high state of excitation. The enforced rest and the training of the mind to controlled

effort, as in puzzling over a new stitch and so forth, result in the cultivation of a new habit, the habit of controlled coördination of muscular movement. Try it.

In almost every instance, the matronly woman depends much upon dress for her beauty. In this, fashion has treated her cavalierly during the last decade, when no account whatever has been taken of her style or needs. Indeed, for several seasons, middle-aged women who have blindly followed the fashions instead of remaining individual have appeared ridiculous and even freakish—by wearing, for instance, exaggerated short skirts and so revealing calves that may have years before possessed youthful and graceful curves, or low-cut waists, too conspicuous in the glimpses they afford even of prettily rounded throats and swelling bosoms, and most unbecoming and inartistic on the woman whose neck only too frankly tells her age and whose sunken and shriveled breasts cry

out for an additional covering to hide their condition.

Carefully made guimpes of the finest white footing or bobbinette, when perfectly fitted to the neck, so completely cover its imperfections and so closely simulate whitened skin as to defy detection. The careful woman whose neck resists rejuvenating processes resorts to guimpes. She also wears a brassière, not only for its beautifying effect upon her figure, but for the comfort it affords. The inclination of the bust is to sag by its own weight, and the strain upon the tissues is harmful, besides being ugly.

In the matter of dress, every woman should study her individual style; when this is done, good taste is usually displayed, and good taste means beauty. The scientific study of clothes to fit those of matronly build has at last been undertaken, and it is to be hoped that the purveyors and outfitters to women will give greater attention to the cut and style of her clothes in the near future, since few women have the ability to design or even to select clothes that are suitable and chic to their individual needs. Women are like "dumb driven cattle" when it comes to clothes.

Even a woman who is not of middle age should dress in quiet colors in public. Black, dark blue, purple, and gray can safely be worn by women of all ages, while white for the house and for warm-weather outdoor wear is universally becoming. All shades of brown are fatal to those without a high natural color; indeed brown is deadly to most women except in soft furs. Whereas cream and the palest of biscuit—nothing *écru* or that has a tinge of brown in it—is often exquisitely attractive on women whose type calls for it.

The matured gentlewoman has recourse to delicate perfumery and loves to scent all her clothing, lingerie, gloves, veils, and so forth with a perfume that

stamps her individuality upon her friends. There is nothing quite so distinctively elusive as this. American women give altogether too little attention to the subtle art of attracting through an exquisite scent, by means of which they may always be identified.

For this purpose, nothing quite equals *Spanish leather*, which is prepared in the following manner:

Small square pieces of chamois skin or white kid are soaked in the following solution for three or four days:

Oil of rose, synthetic.....	4 drams
Oil of neroli, synthetic.....	4 drams
Oil of sandalwood.....	4 drams
Oil of lavender flowers.....	2 drams
Oil of lemon.....	2 drams
Oil of cinnamon.....	30 minims
Linalyl acetate.....	2 drams
Coumarin.....	12 grains
Artificial musk.....	1 dram
Tincture of benzoin.....	3 ounces

The tincture of benzoin for this purpose should be made from two ounces of Siam benzoin and five ounces of alcohol.

Remove the leather from the liquid, allow it to drain, spread it on a glass plate to dry, and coat one side of the leather—the rough side of the kid—with the following mixture, applying the latter by means of a brush:

Benzoic acid, sublimed.....	2 drams
Musk.....	12 grains
Civet.....	12 grains
Gum arabic.....	6½ drams
Glycerin.....	5 drams
Water.....	1½ ounces

Rub up the musk and civet thoroughly with the acid and gum; then incorporate the glycerin and water so as to form a smooth mixture. Fold or double the leather over, so that the two halves will adhere to each other, and allow to dry.

This perfumed skin will emit its odor for years. It is used instead of sachet bags to place in trunks, drawers, closets, writing desks, gloves, handkerchief

boxes, and so forth. Pieces of this skin may also be sewed in the clothing and lingerie.

Answers to Queries

GRACE W.—(1). The answer to your first question lies in an article published in the April, 1916, number of this magazine, entitled "Restoring Sagging Tissues." Here you will find illustrated instructions for restoring a broken-down and "cordlike" neck. The business office can still supply this number at twenty cents a copy. (2). You are in need of an intestinal tonic laxative, the name of which will gladly be sent you upon receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope. (3). It goes without saying that retaining a dental plate in the mouth during sleep is highly detrimental to health. The mouth is swarming with bacteria, and by this means you are furnishing them a breeding place. (4). If you use the intestinal tonic referred to above, you will not require salts. The habitual use of salts is not without danger, especially to the delicate lining of the kidneys. A glass of fairly hot water containing the juice of half a lemon, taken some time before breakfast, is indicated in some cases.

MRS. M.—Kindly repeat your request, inclosing stamped, self-addressed envelope, and I will gladly send you directions for softening and perfuming your bath and for Beauty Water. You can purchase either crystals or salts, but these are not as effectual as the preparations you make for yourself.

MARY N.—I am sorry you failed to see an article published in this magazine some time ago—in July, 1915—on "Local and General Reduction Cures," as it contains much of special interest to you. An exercise for abdominal reduction frequently described in these pages consists in standing erect with the feet firmly planted upon the floor. Inhale slowly and deeply, while the arms are thrown above the head. The body is now bent forward from the waist, the legs being held rigid, and slowly lowered until the fingers touch the floor, while the breath is exhaled.

Persons with large abdomens are unable fully to execute this maneuver, but by daily persistent endeavor, they will find it more and more possible, as the superabundant tissue gradually melts away.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

In carrying out this exercise, two things must be borne in mind—to clothe the body loosely and to breathe fresh air. Other measures to insure local reduction will be furnished upon request.

BOY OF SIXTEEN.—Yes, I did write Eva to send to me privately for detailed treatment of blackheads, and so forth. And so I do to you, because space forbids me to do more than say that your body both inside and out must be kept scrupulously clean, that your diet must be corrected, and that locally your skin requires special attention—scrubbing with a flesh brush and tincture of green soap, perhaps. A blackhead should never be squeezed out with the finger nail, but should be removed with a tiny instrument made expressly for this purpose and sold for ten cents at all drug stores. A sulphur ointment is also helpful. So, you see, there are more factors entering into the treatment of blackheads than I can give unless you send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply.

LOS ANGELES.—I am sorry that you have found it necessary to write as you have concerning the formula of Professor Sabourand for devitalizing superfluous hair. The chief ingredient in this formula is an element which Germany's marvelous chemists have abstracted from barium. Many druggists, I learn, have never heard of it and seem unable to procure it. Therefore many readers complained that they could not have the formula put up. To these was sent the name of a reputable house of New York chemists, whose price was so prohibitive that again complaints came to me. Desiring only to be of service to my correspondents, the matter has been brought to the notice of another firm that is willing to put up the ointment at a minimum profit, as long as Germany's submarines can bring drugs.

HERMAN.—You are foolish to consider for a moment anything that will prevent the activity of the skin. In your case the tiny nerves that govern the process of perspiration may be unstable, so causing a relaxation of the glands. Your best course is a daily cold shower on arising; or a cold, salt-water rubdown with coarse mitts, until the body glows, then drying the skin with Turkish towels. Deep-breathing exercises in the open air will facilitate the cure. A list of these will gladly be furnished you upon proper application.

Anti-Kamnia -FOR HEADACHES, NEURALGIA, GRIPPE AND ALL NERVE PAINS- **Ask for A-K Tabs** **TABLETS**

Various Headaches

"It is necessary in order to treat headaches properly to understand the causes which produce the affection," says Dr. J. W. Ray of Blockton, Alabama. Continuing, he says: "Physicians cannot even begin the treatment of a disease without knowing what causes give rise to it, and we must remember that headache is to be treated according to the same rule. We must not only be particular to give a remedy intended to counteract the cause which produces the headache, but we must also give a remedy to relieve the pain until the cause of the trouble has been removed. To answer this purpose Anti-kamnia Tablets will be found a most convenient and satisfactory remedy. One tablet every one to three hours gives comfort and rest in most severe cases of headache, neuralgia and particularly the headaches of women.

FOR SICK-HEADACHE

If a patient is subject to regular attacks of sick-headache, he should take two A-K Tablets when he feels the least sign of an oncoming attack. These tablets are prompt in action, and can be depended upon to produce relief in a very few minutes. Such patients should always be instructed to keep their bowels open.

Influenza or LaGrippe

It is quite refreshing these days to read of a clearly defined treatment for Influenza or LaGrippe. In an article in the "Lancet-Clinic," Dr. James Bell of New York City, says he is convinced that too much medication is both unnecessary and injurious.

When called to a case of LaGrippe, the patient is usually seen when the fever is present, as the chill which occasionally ushers in the disease has generally passed away. Dr. Bell then orders that the bowels be opened freely with salts, citrate of magnesia or other laxative. For the high fever, severe headache, pain and general soreness, one Anti-kamnia Tablet every two hours is quickly followed by complete relief.

A Remedy for Pain

"The efficiency of any drug," says Dr. C. P. Robbins, "is known to us by the results we obtain from its use. One of the principal symptoms of all diseases is pain, and this is what the patient most often applies to us for, i. e., something to relieve his pain. If we can arrest this promptly, the patient is most liable to trust in us for the other remedies which will effect a permanent cure. One remedy which I have used largely in my practice is Anti-kamnia Tablets. Many and varied are their uses. I have put them to the test on many occasions, and have never been disappointed. I found them especially valuable for headaches of malarial origin, where quinine was being taken. They appear to prevent the bad after-effects of the quinine. Anti-kamnia Tablets are also excellent for the headaches from improper digestion; also for headaches of a neuralgic origin, and especially for women subject to pains at certain times. One or two Anti-kamnia Tablets every two or three hours give prompt relief."

Acute Rheumatism

In the hands of one observer we find that a certain drug has been used with the utmost satisfaction; others have found the same remedy to be a great disappointment. All physicians however agree that every method of treatment is aided by the administration of some remedy to relieve the pain and quiet the nervous system, and Dr. W. S. Schultze expresses the opinion of thousands of practitioners when he says that Anti-kamnia Tablets should be given preference over all other remedies for relief of the pain in all forms of rheumatism. They are also unsurpassed for headache, neuralgia and all pain.

Indigestion-Dyspepsia

Are you distressed after eating? Do you have nausea when riding in the cars, or on the train or boat? Take one A-K Tablet and get relief.

When to Take Anti-Kamnia Tablets

As a Pain Reliever—In headache, migraine, coryza, la grippe and its after-effects.

As an Anodyne or Sedative—In indigestion, gastralgia, dyspepsia, hysteria, insomnia, car-sickness, sea-sickness, worry and sight-seer's fatigue.

As an Antipyretic—In intermittent, puerperal and malarial fevers, bronchitis, pleurisy, etc.

As an Anti-Neuralgic—In acute or chronic neuralgia, facial neuralgia, earache, toothache and pains of sciatica.

As an Anti-Rheumatic—For the pain in acute or chronic rheumatism and gout.

All genuine Anti-kamnia Tablets bear the **AK** monogram. At all druggists in any quantity or in 10c and 25c packages. Ask for A-K Tablets and insist on getting them.



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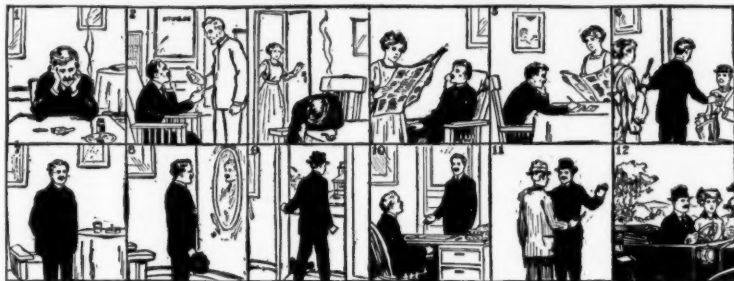
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THE LADIES' WORLD

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Easily Conquered in 3 Days

Picture No. 1—Shows how tobacco has nearly wrecked a man's career. He has become nervous, dyspeptic and irritable; he cannot sleep well, has lost his energy and ambition. **No. 2**—The doctor says: "I'm giving you this medicine but it will do you very little good, unless you stop killing yourself with tobacco." **No. 3**—Still a slave; another collapse. **No. 4**—Wife reads advertisement of Mr. Woods. **No. 5**—He writes for Mr. Woods' free book. **No. 6**—Being convinced by multitude of proofs, he has ordered remedy 'which is in box postman is now delivering. **No. 7**—Has begun to overcome tobacco craving. Already is feeling much better; vigor and ambition returning. **No. 8**—Surprising improvement; all craving gone, filled with new courage and backed by good health. **No. 9**—Beginning anew. **No. 10**—Succeeding in business. **No. 11**—No trouble to resist temptation of tobacco in any form. **No. 12**—By clear-headedness, good health and energy, he has now become prosperous.

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Why continue to commit slow suicide when you can live a really contented life, if you only get your body and nerves right? It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to rid yourself of tobacco by suddenly stopping with "will-power"—don't do it. The correct way is to eliminate nicotine poison from the system, and genuinely overcome the craving.

Tobacco is poisonous and seriously injures health in several ways, causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas belching, gnawing, or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach; constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigor, red spots on skin, throat irritation, catarrh, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, melancholy, lung trouble, impure (poisoned) blood, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, bad teeth, foul breath, lassitude, lack of ambition, weakening and falling out of hair and many other disorders.

Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco, or snuff.

Here is an opportunity to receive **FREE** a carefully compiled treatise on the subject, containing interesting and valuable information that you should be glad to learn about. This book tells all about the renowned **THREE DAYS' METHOD** by which thousands and thousands saved themselves from the life-wrecking tobacco habit. Full particulars, including the book on tobacco and snuff habit, will be mailed **FREE TO YOU**, in plain wrapper, postpaid. All you need do is merely **REQUEST IT**. A postcard will do. Address

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Tobacco Redeemer is in no sense a substitute for tobacco, but is a radical, efficient treatment. After finishing the treatment you have absolutely no desire to use tobacco again or to continue the use of the remedy. It quiets the nerves, and will make you feel better in every way. If you really want to quit the tobacco habit—get rid of it so completely that when you see others using it, it will not awaken the slightest desire in you—you should at once begin a course of **Tobacco Redeemer** treatment for the habit.

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A single trial will convince the most skeptical. Our legal, binding, money-back guarantee goes with each full treatment. If **Tobacco Redeemer** fails to banish the tobacco habit when taken according to the plain and easy directions, your money will be cheerfully refunded upon demand.

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If you're a slave of the tobacco habit and want to find a sure, quick way of quitting "for keeps" you owe it to yourself and to your family to mail the coupon below or send your name and address on a postal and receive our free booklet on the deadly effect of tobacco on the human system, and positive proof that **Tobacco Redeemer** will quickly free you from the habit.

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